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ABSTRACT

This Portfolio Builder, designed for participants in the Building Better Career Futures (BBCF) program, helps participants explore, work towards, and realize their life and career goals. It is to be used as a tool to help students reflect on their own ideas about career development and to later market themselves in the world of work. This Portfolio Builder is divided into the four main components of the program: "Understanding Career Development," "Opportunities in the Labour Market," "Opportunities for Me," and "Taking Charge." Each component highlights various themes, each of which is organized into three parts: Introduction, BBCF Handouts, and Expansion Zone. The introductory part outlines the themes for each section and how these connect with career development. Ideas behind the activities and real life stories about career development are presented. The second part of each theme includes BBCF handouts of activities useful in group or individual career exploration. The final section, The Expansion Zone, picks up where the handouts to the exercises leave off. The Expansion Zone provides reflective questions elaborating on the activities as well as additional exercises to help with building a portfolio. An appendix outlines parts of a functional resume, a bibliography of labor market authors, and a list of relevant career websites. (MKA)

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Building Better Career Futures

Portfolio Builder

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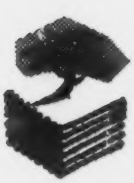

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The Portfolio Builder

The **Portfolio Builder** is It is divided into the four main components of the program:

- Understanding Career Development
  - Opportunities in the Labour Market
    - Opportunities for Me
      - Taking Charge

For each theme, your **Portfolio** is organized into the following sections:

- **An Introduction** — that outlines the themes for each section and how they connect with your career development. In the introduction of each section, you will find the ideas behind the activities, real life stories about career development and much, much more. It gives important background information and sets the context for the section.

- **The Handouts for the BBCF program** — All of the handouts that you'll be using during the group sessions are included. The program facilitator will be guiding you through these portions of the **Portfolio**.

- **The Expansion Zone** — The Expansion Zone takes off from where the handouts to the exercises in the program leave off. In the Expansion Zone, you will find reflective questions elaborating on activities in BBCF as well as additional exercises to help you build your **Portfolio**.

At the end of the BBCF program, you take the **Portfolio Builder** with you as a record of your career development to date and as a tool to help you market yourself in the world of work.

Table of Contents

I. Preface 1

II. Understanding Career Development 3

Introduction

- ▲ Why Portfolio Building is Important in Today's Labour Market ... 5
- ▲ What Career Development is and How a Portfolio Can Help 7

BBCF Handouts

- ▲ High Five Career Messages 9
- ▲ Labour Market Myths and Realities 15
- ▲ Career Development Model 17
- ▲ Pyramid to Diamond 18

Expansion Zone

- ▲ Making Your Mark 19
- ▲ Reflection on the High Five 20
- ▲ Your Career Journey to Date 21
- ▲ Keeping a Journal 22

Understanding Career Development Checklist and Skills Alert **23**

III. Opportunities in the Labour Market 25

1. Structure of the Labour Market 27

Introduction

- ▲ The Labour Market and You 27
- ▲ Opportunities Lost and Found: Erica's Story 27
- ▲ Be Snoopy 29
- ▲ It's Like Playing in the NHL 29

BBCF Handouts

- ▲ Structure of the Labour Market 31
- ▲ The 3Ps of Labour Market Information 32
- ▲ News Analysis Exercise 33
- ▲ Things You Would Do for Love or Money 34

Expansion Zone

- ▲ What if Cows Could Talk? 35
- ▲ The Real Event 38
- ▲ Zooming Out, Zooming In 40

2. Structure of Opportunity 43
Introduction
▲ TVS, Spaceships and Automobiles 43
▲ Talent Pooling Creates Opportunity 43
▲ Researching Creates Prospects 45
BBCF Handouts
▲ The Times They Are A Changin' 46
▲ Steps to Plant a Tree 47
▲ The Tree 48
Expansion Zone
▲ A Day in the Life 51
▲ Using Your Noodle 52
▲ Detective Sniff and the Opportunity Caper 53

3. Accessing Labour Market Information 55
Introduction
▲ How People Look for Work 55
▲ What Makes a Star? 56
▲ Six Degrees of Separation 56
BBCF Handouts
▲ Skills of Information Interviewing and Rules of Feedback 57
▲ Information Interviewing Practice 58
Expansion Zone
▲ Finding the Roots of Your Net 59
▲ Accessing Your Net 60
▲ Network Inventory 62
▲ Career News You Can Use Through Interviews 63

4. Employability Skills 75
Introduction
▲ Why Employability Skills Are Important 75
▲ 'Soft Skill' Sets for Different Sectors 76
BBCF Handouts
▲ Employability Skills Profile 77
▲ Employability Skills Assessment 78
Expansion Zone
▲ Task, Skills and Attributes 84
▲ **Opportunities in the Labour Market Checklist and Skills Alert** .. **88**

IV. Opportunities For Me 89

1. Values 91

Introduction

▲ What are Values? 91

BBCF Handouts

▲ Four Metaphors 93
▲ Work Value Items 95
▲ Where have We Come From? 96

Expansion Zone

▲ Onion Rings 99
▲ "If I Had a Million Dollars" 102
▲ Working Through Work Messages 103
▲ "Recently, Stared in ..." 105
▲ Packing Your Values Suitcase 107

2. Dependable Strengths 109

Introduction

▲ Strengths Aren't Just for Heroes Anymore 109
▲ Andy's Fifth Gear 110

BBCF Handouts

▲ Noting Dependable Strengths and Skills 111

Expansion Zone

▲ Everyday Success Stories 113

3. Mapping 117

Introduction

▲ Going Full Circle 117

BBCF Handouts

▲ Mapping - Option 1 119
▲ Mapping - Option 2 120

Expansion Zone

▲ Taking Off in One Direction 121

4. Career/Life Project 123

Introduction

▲ The Butterfly's Wings 123

BBCF Handouts

▲ Career/Life Project 125
▲ Career/Life Project Extended 129

Expansion Zone

▲ Your Mission Statement 131
▲ **Opportunities for Me Checklist and Skills Alert** 133

V. TAKING CHARGE 135

Introduction

- Choosing Your Cantaloupes 137
- Wise Decision Making 138
- Andy's Decision to Go to Toronto 140
- Just the Fact Mam'. Just the Facts. 142
- A Decision Making Repertoire 143

BBCF Handouts

- The Funnel: A Career Development Organizer 145
- Traditional Decision-Making Model 146
- Are You Ready for the Paradoxical Principles? 147
- DeBono's Hats 148
- Hats Exercise 149
- Consolidation Map 150
- Consequence Matrix 151
- Critical Questions 152
- Goal Test 153
- My Plan for Now is... My Initial Steps Are... 154

Expansion Zone

- Some Habits are Meant to be Built On, Not Broken 157
- Creative Outlet -- Put Your Thinking Caps On! 158
- "Future-Journaling" 160
- A Recipe for Jus de You 161
- "Lucky Chances" -- The Science of Decision Making 162
- Putting Your Decision in Writing 164
- Creating Sign Posts on the Road to Your Career Goal 165
- Going to Plan B (Contingency Planning) 167
- **Taking Charge Checklist and Skills Alert** 168

VI. APPENDIX A

- Parts of a Functional Résumé ..... a
- Bibliography of Labour Market Authors c
- Interesting Career Websites to Check Out ..... e

The Portfolio Builder

PREFACE

The Portfolio Builder is a guide that helps you explore, work towards and realize your future life and career goals. It is an ongoing, in-process journal that helps you begin to document your lifelong career journey. Think of it as a well-prepared and organized scrapbook that stores information about your skills and strengths, abilities and ideas, beliefs and goals. It is a place to express your thoughts and reflect upon your career development.

This is YOUR portfolio which will grow as you research your career options and implement plans to realize your goals. Making a portfolio your own is an important part of its development. Include anything that documents your ideas and what you have learned. It is a self-portrait that records who you are, where you've been and where you see yourself headed. You'll be able to draw on the pieces of this collection to market yourself and to continue your career development.

Your portfolio is your personal record of your career journey. Because it contains personal information, you would not give it to an employer in its entirety. You select pieces from it that are applicable to a specific job, contract or promotion and present materials from it at an interview or meeting when it is appropriate. You may want to create a separate section in your portfolio that contains only the materials that are useful in an interview situation. Feel free to add pieces and reorganize the Portfolio Builder. The Portfolio Builder serves two functions: it is a tool to support you in your career development journey as you complete the BBCF program. It also will serve as a record of this process that will include evidence of your knowledge and abilities.

The Portfolio Builder will guide you in collecting information that will help you write a résumé, complete job applications, write cover and follow-up letters, craft proposals and prepare for job interviews. It can be added to and rearranged often. It is your work in progress.

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Understanding Career Development

The introduction to this section describes:

- ☆ Why Portfolio Building is Important in Today's Labour Market
- ☆ What Career Development is and How a Portfolio Can Help

BBCF Handouts:

- ◎ High Five Career Messages
- ◎ Labour Market Myths and Realities
- ◎ Career Development Model
- ◎ Pyramid to Diamond: The Workplace Then & Now

Activities in the Expansion Zone:

- ☆ Making Your Mark
- ☆ Reflection on the High Five
- ☆ Your Career Journey to Date
- ☆ Keeping a Journal

Why Build a Portfolio?

Imagine that you are being interviewed for one of these two positions (pick your favourite): the first is an entry level job at a popular magazine and the other is a position at an antique car detailing shop. At the interview, your potential employer asks you for evidence of your work. For the first job, they ask for three pieces of your writing. In the second case, you have just finished describing the car that you rebuilt last summer when the interviewer asks for before and after photos. You could respond to this request in two ways:

Without a Portfolio

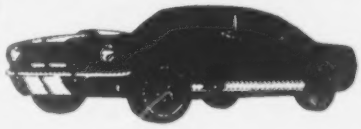
a) **Entry Level Job at a Popular Magazine** - You were a little taken aback by the request because you know that you have developed into quite a writer and would have loved to show the interviewer your work over the past few years. Yet, you didn't think that you would have to bring anything more than your résumé to the interview. You reply that you could send these items tomorrow. The interviewer agrees to your request and states that they will look at them when time allows.

b) **Position at a Antique Car Detailing Shop** - You would have loved to show them your pride and joy and you have pictures of the entire rebuilding process. But, you didn't think that the interviewer would want to see your photos. You suggest another meeting to review your photo album.

With a Portfolio

a) **Entry Level Position at a Popular Magazine** - You were waiting for the opportunity to show off your work. You give the interviewer three pieces of your writing - an article you wrote for your school's newspaper, the introduction to a research paper that you are particularly proud of and an article you wrote for an alternative magazine "Together," you say, "they show the development of my writing and research skills over the past few years."

b) **Position at an Antique Car Detailing Shop** - You show this potential employer the state of the 1966 Mustang when you bought it at the wrecking yard to its present state as a highly detailed and pristine car.



Which response do you think would impress the interviewer?

A well-laid out and prepared portfolio can give you a leading edge in today's labour market. In a visual manner, it captures your work, achievements, skills and knowledge. Building a portfolio is not new. Artists, for example, have always kept portfolios as a way of showing the range, quality and versatility of their work. For an artist to enroll in art schools or to obtain work, they need a well-developed portfolio. In today's changing world of work, professional employment portfolios are becoming more popular. Portfolios are now required in highly competitive fields such as teaching.

A portfolio can give you an edge in today's labour market because it:

- sets you apart
- shows your unique and marketable qualities
- supports what you tell the employer by demonstrating what you have to offer

Items that you may want to include in your portfolio are:

- résumé
- samples of writing
- transcripts, certificate, diplomas
- evidence of volunteer work
- evidence of learning
- photos and video tapes of you work
- memberships
- letter of recommendation

Of course, the list can go on and on. The important thing to remember is that a portfolio is a collection of your achievements and aspirations relevant to your career development.

What is Career Development ... and How does a Portfolio Help?

Career development is the lifelong process of self-managing your learning and work. It is not an event, a single decision or a happening. Each word in this definition is important. "Learning" occurs everywhere, not just in school. What we learn influences our interests and builds on our skills. We are constantly learning and constantly integrating new learning into our "career" lives. "Work" includes the many ways we contribute to our community and to society. It includes not only what we are paid to do, but also the many roles we play in our lives where we work for no money. Volunteering is the most obvious example. Parenting is a less obvious one. No parent would say that parenting is not work, and all would acknowledge that parenting is a learning experience! Hobbies and interests which we pursue, build and expand our "career" lives.

We often use the terms "job", "occupation" and "career" interchangeably. "Career" is much larger than a job or occupation, however. Consider the following example: Mark is currently working as a nurse in the geriatrics unit of Memorial Hospital. This is his job. His occupation is nursing. In today's rapidly changing world of work, we are likely to have a many different "Jobs" (so, Mark will likely work as a nurse in a variety of different settings) and we can expect to have jobs in 6 to 10 different fields or "Occupations (so, it is unlikely that Mark will work only as a nurse. He may teach other health care workers, he may write for a health magazine, and/or he may decide to go back to school)." Each of these builds our "Career." Our "Careers" are the sequence of learning (formal and informal) and work (both paid and unpaid) through out our lives.

Consider the following:

- Experts say that many of the "Jobs" of the 21st century haven't been invented yet.
- Today, a common interview question is "What have you been learning lately?"

Career development is about taking charge of your own future and becoming a self-manager of your learning and work. This necessitates being adaptive and responsive to changes in the labour market. It means that you need to stay current by constantly updating skills and learning. It requires that you understand yourself, knowing and acknowledging your skill sets, and be able to demonstrate to employers that you can take on new and varied tasks.

Your career development is like a roadmap to keep track and on track of your learning, work, skills and self. A portfolio is one organizational tool to organize and document your career journey and to use to assist you in manoeuvring career transitions successfully.

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HIGH 5 MESSAGES
CHANGE IS CONSTANT

1. What does this really mean to you?	3. What skills/attitudes will help?
2. What are the risks/challenges of this message?	4. How might you act on this message in your life?

HIGH 5 MESSAGES
FOLLOW YOUR HEART

1. What does this really mean to you?	3. What skills/attitudes will help?
2. What are the risks/challenges of this message?	4. How might you act on this message in your life?

HIGH 5 MESSAGES
FOCUS ON THE JOURNEY

1. What does this really mean to you?	3. What skills/attitudes will help?
2. What are the risks/challenges of this message?	4. How might you act on this message in your life?

? HIGH 5 MESSAGES STAY LEARNING ?	
1. What does this really mean to you?	3. What skills/attitudes will help?
2. What are the risks/challenges of this message?	4. How might you act on this message in your life?

HIGH 5 MESSAGES
BE AN ALLY ACCESS YOUR ALLIES

1. What does this really mean to you?	3. What skills/attitudes will help?
2. What are the risks/challenges of this message?	4. How might you act on this message in your life?

HIGH 5 MESSAGE
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

1. What does this really mean to you?	3. What skills/attitudes will help?
2. What are the risks/challenges of this message?	4. How might you act on this message in your life?

Career Myths

- Career choice = Long-term commitment
- Career choice = Total personal fulfilment
- "Correct" career choice = Guaranteed future
- One career for life
- Career = Linear process, usually upward

Career Realities

- Opportunity/Requirement for change is constant
- Long-term commitment to learning and to change
- Paid employment only one element of personal fulfilment
- Work/Life activities - Source of meaning
- No guarantees in life; No guarantees in career
- Multi-tracking; Job sharing; Restructuring
- Careers are like curved and winding roads. They have many twists and turns and are rarely predictable.

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Career Development Model

The capacity to vision yourself in the future in a positive way.

The ability to see alternatives in the labour market.

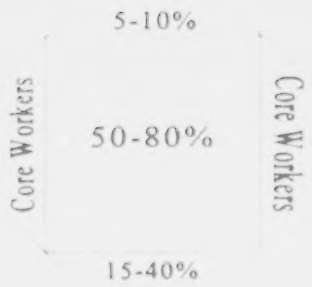
The knowledge of your skills and a sense of purpose and direction.

A plan to start and a sense of confidence and ability that you can make it happen.

TRADITIONAL PYRAMID

Traditional Pyramid Workplace

EMERGING DIAMOND



Making YOUR Mark

If someone opened to the cover page of your portfolio, what would they learn about you? Your portfolio is all about you and one way to begin to personalize it is to create your own cover page. Take a blank sheet of paper, lots of markers, pencils, paints (or, if you have access, a drawing program on a computer) and create a cover to your portfolio. Create a logo that reflects your interests and desires. Think about capturing yourself in a design that would make others curious to learn more about you. Think of words that best describe you and create an image that reflects those words. We are not all artists, so don't worry if it is not auctioned off at Christie's for two million dollars. The point of this exercise is to begin thinking about how you might convey a small snapshot of who you are to someone else.

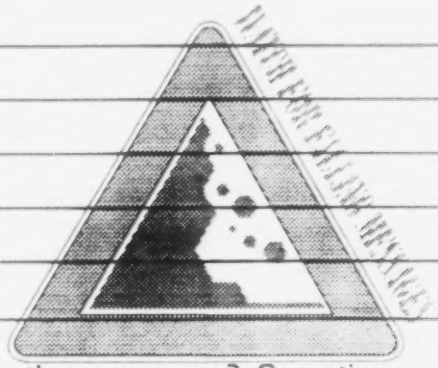
✳ IDEA ✳

Organizations stamp their logo on many marketing tools such as:

- Business Cards
- Letter Head
- Brochure

Marketing yourself is an important skill in today's world of work. Besides the cover page of your portfolio, where could you put your logo that would help you stand out in the crowd? List all of your ideas.

You have looked behind career development messages such as the "High Five." Can you think of any other messages that you have heard about today's changing world of work? To get you started, one example is "Think Skills, Not Occupation."* List all the ones you can think of below:



Do you agree with these other messages? Sometimes, we carry around messages that reinforce myths and they end up getting in our way. Other messages, such as the "High Five", can be affirming and helpful. If you like the other messages you've listed above, use the questions in the "High Five" activity (What does this really mean to you?, What are the risks/challenges of this message?, What skills/attitudes will help? and How might you act on this message in your life?) as a starting point to get underneath the career development messages.

Add additional sheets of paper to your portfolio to work through any messages you stumble upon. Use the same questions as above (or use other questions that you have thought of). Record your related ideas/thoughts.

*"Think Skills, Not Occupation" is "new economy" message that explores the idea that today's world of work is skill- based. Employers are looking for skill sets. For example, twenty to thirty years ago the skills required to be a secretary were filing, shorthand, typing so many words per minute and a pleasant phone manner. Training courses focussed on these technical skills and these skills alone. At this time, many people who trained for this position believed that they were trained for this occupation and that this was the paid-work option of their career. Once a secretary always a secretary, so to speak.

But consider this position today. Today, secretaries are called administrative and executive assistants who need strong people, teamwork and organizational skills as well as computer literacy and accounting skills. Employers are chiefly looking for people who can demonstrate that they have the ability to stay current and adapt to the changing requirements of the job.

Where You Are In Your Career Journey?

The Career Development Model has four key outcomes:

- the capacity to vision yourself in the future in a positive way
- the ability to see alternatives in the labour market
- the knowledge of your skills and a sense of purpose and direction
- a plan to start and a sense of confidence and ability to make it happen.

While its still early in your portfolio building, its important to get an initial sense of where you are in your career journey. Jot down a few ideas about:

Where you see yourself in the future?

Do you see alternatives for yourself in the labour market? If so, what are they?

What are the most important skills you need to reach your future goals?

Can you identify what the first step towards your career/life goals might be?

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Keeping a Journal

In the Portfolio Builder, there are many guided activities and opportunities to record you reflections in the Expansion Zone. There is space allocated throughout the Portfolio to record you thoughts and feelings. You may want to also add additional pieces of paper to the Portfolio to jot your ideas, reflections on your experiences and insights. You can add pieces throughout your Portfolio or you can create a journal in a separate notebook.

A journal can be kept to chronicle a wide range of experiences. It provides a safe outlet for recording your frustrations, fears, insights and pride. Journalling has an enduring quality that allows the author to revisit their experiences from a new perspective. It provides the kind of reflection that is critical to learning from our experiences and to integrate them into our lives in a personally meaningful way.

Journaling Tips

- Your journal is your place to record your feelings and thoughts. It is your choice whether you share your journal with others. If you do decide to show your journal to someone make sure that you and the person you want to share it with are comfortable. Set ground rules to ensure that you have a safe place to share your ideas.

- A journal is a learning tool. Therefore, you should be aware of what you hope to get out of the process. Take time to think about how you might use your journal and establish what you hope to achieve. The way you use and organize your journal should match to your personal learning style. Some prefer a free flowing, more spontaneous journal. Others benefit from organizing their journals in a more structured way by having section headings and dates.

- Do not limit yourself. Your journal is your place to talk to yourself about dreams, problems, the future, ... anything at all. Use drawings; add newspaper articles or cartoons; use red ink when you feel frustrated! The more of yourself you can put into your journal, the more you will gain from it!

- Go back and re-read your journal. Each time you make a new entry, read and reflect on what you have written. Review earlier entries every once and a while. Much of the learning will come from the perspective gained with time and reflections on your own growth and development.

Possible First Entry

Write down three questions you want answered about finding or having a career direction.

Understanding Career Development Checklist

Check ✓ the statements that apply to you.

- ❑ I know what a portfolio is and how it applies to my career development.
- ❑ I know what career development is all about.
- ❑ I can think critically about career development messages and define what they mean to me.
- ❑ I have ideas around how the four key outcomes in career development apply to me.
- ❑ I have created a logo which I could use to market myself to employers.
- ❑ I understand the benefits of keeping a journal and know how to create and maintain one.

An important part of career development is the acquisition of skills. In today's changing world of work we need to draw on our abilities and accomplishments. It's like the writer or the car detailer applying for their respective positions. They need both the skills to do the job and the ability to present and promote those skills (self-marketing). The exercises in this part of the Portfolio Builder have been intended to help you develop:

- organizational skills
- ways to think critically
- creativity skills
- self-marketing skills

Write down one concrete way that you've used each of the above skills through the Portfolio Builder.

Opportunities in the Labour Market

This section of the **Portfolio Builder** includes the following topics:

1. Structure of the Labour Market

Introduction
* The Labour Market and You
* Opportunities Lost and Found: Erica's Story
* Be Snoopy
* It's Like Playing in the NHL

BBCF Handouts
* Structure of the Labour Market
* The 3 Ps of Labour Market Information
* Things You Would Do For Love or Money

The Expansion Zone
* What if Cows Could Talk?
* The Real Event
* Zooming Out, Zooming In

2. Structure of Opportunity

Introduction
* TVs, Spaceships and Automobiles
* Talent Pooling Creates Opportunity
* Researching Creates Prospects

BBCF Handouts
* The Times They Are A Changin'
* The Tree

The Expansion Zone
* A Day in the Life
* Using Your Noodle
* Detective Sniff and the Opportunity Caper

3. Accessing Labour Market Information

Introduction
* How People Look for Work
* What Makes a Star?
* Six Degrees of Separation

BBCF Handouts
* Skills of Information Interviewing and Roles of Feedback
* Information Interviewing Practice

The Expansion Zone
* Finding the Roots of Your Net
* Accessing Your Net
* Network Inventory
* Career News You Can Use Through Interviews *(Information Interview)*

4. Employability Skills

Introduction
* Why Employability Skills Are Important
* 'Soft Skill' Sets for Different Sectors

BBCF Handouts
* Employability Skills Profile
* Employability Skills Assessment

The Expansion Zone
* Tasks, Skills and Attributes

1. The Structure of the Labour Market

The Labour Market and You

Imagine what your career might look like twenty years from now. What do you think you might be doing? If you were to map its course, would it be a straight line from one position to another or would it have many twists and turns along the way? In today's rapidly changing world of work, most career paths will not be a straightforward and linear course, but will curve and wind with many stops, restarts and U-turns. To manage the changes throughout your career, you need to be active in its development. This means knowing what's happening in the labour market, understanding how it is structured and accessing relevant and up-to-date labour market information. Staying informed and thinking critically about what's going on around you is vital in managing career transitions and finding work opportunities.

The Opportunities in the Labour Market section of your Portfolio Builder introduces you to the structure of the labour market, provides strategies for finding work opportunities and accessing labour market information and guides you in creating your own employability skills profile. The introductory part of this section includes stories, ideas and examples that you can carry with you as you work through the Handouts and explore the activities in the Expansion Zone.

Opportunities Lost and Found: Erica's Story

Erica's story shows how the components of the labour market (social and economic trends, occupational structures, the composition of the labour market, education and training, technology and the environment) impact on career paths. It is based on a actual story of a woman whose career path wound its way around two recessions and time out for family. Erica started out with a university degree in archaeology just as Canada entered the recession of the early 1980s. Over the next couple of years she looked for a job unsuccessfully, married and started a family. Soon after the birth of her first child, Erica's marriage ended in divorce. With this new curve in her road of life, she struggled with the challenge of being a single parent.

After her divorce, the only job that she was able to get was as a photo-lab technician. Unfortunately, it did not pay enough for Erica to make ends meet. She realized quickly that she would have to get a better-paying job to support her family. She enrolled in an electronics technology program at a community college, positive that practical training in a growing field would land her a "good" job. But with a family to support now, her debts mounted and after finding no alternative, she dropped out after two years of the three year program.

The job she was able to get upon leaving school was in a credit union. It paid more money than her photo-lab job. But after a year, a second recession hit and Erica was laid-off when the company began to down-size. She was disappointed because she had not been able to use the skills that she had developed to carve a place for herself in the labour market.

One day, over coffee, Erica discussed her dilemma with her friend, Stacey. Stacey suggested that Erica look into a re-entry program for careers in technology at the local community college. Stacey knew several people who had taken the 16-week program and they said that it had helped them get their careers on track. On her friend's advice, Erica talked with the course facilitator and decided to enroll in the program to help her take charge of the next steps in her career journey.

When she finished the program, she had a direction - a turn in her career that combined her research and writing skills from university with her interest in technology: technical writing. She then enrolled in a technical writing program at the same community college and after one semester she was offered a six month contract with a telecommunications company which paid more than twice what she made at the credit union. She found technical writing field to be exciting and challenging work. After a few more contracts and a lot of learning on the job, she joined forces with a colleague from the college and started her own technical writing consulting firm.

Erica's story is an illustration of the labour dynamic in action. Economic trends (in the form of two recessions), marketability of a specific occupation, the social trend toward single parenthood and the impact of technology were all labour market factors combining to shape Erica's career path.

Story was adapted with permission from Elaine O'Reilly and Diane Alfred, Making Sense of Labour Market Information (Ottawa: Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995).

Be Snoopy

Sherlock Holmes did not become a top notch detective by using one source of information to solve their cases. In each investigation, he called upon his research, creative, intuitive and critical thinking skills to gather the information he needed to crack the case. These same skills can be applied to finding out what is happening in the labour market and how it effects your career development. You need to be snoopy enough to find out exactly what you need to make an informed decision about your career. You, also, need to gather information from a variety of sources. Figuratively speaking, get out a magnifying glass and inspect a variety of sources (print and people) for career options and opportunities.

"It's Like I'm Playing in the NHL" – A True Story

When Andy was growing up in Ottawa during the sixties and seventies, there were lots of pop culture icons to look up to. Some of his friends want to be hockey players like Ken Dryden or Bobby Hull. Others wanted to be singers and guitarists for The Rolling Stones or The Who. Andy had a vision of who he wanted to be, but it wasn't a hockey player or musician. Nor, for that matter, was it an Olympic athlete or the Prime Minister. Andy's vision was to be a record store owner.

Lifelong dreams come in many shapes and sizes. For some, like Andy, the vision is strong and never changes. For others, the vision changes as our values and interests change. In either case, it is important to have a vision of who we are and where we'd like to go.

So, how did Andy realize his dream?

He knew that he wanted to run his own store and was naturally attracted to subjects in school that would help him do this. For example, he took courses in math and economics. After he graduated from secondary school, he started his apprenticeship in the "biz" by taking a part-time job in a music store in Toronto. Eventually, he was

hired full-time. With his vision in full view, he watched the store manager and took mental notes on the responsibilities and tasks he would take on if he owned his own store. He learned every aspect of the business from buying and selling to doing bank receipts and payroll.

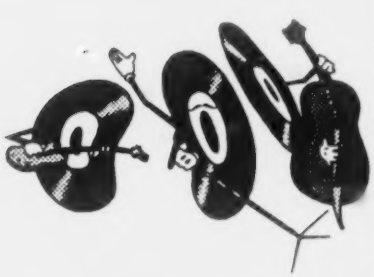
Two years after Andy was hired full-time, the record store was sold and he was out of a job. Nevertheless, he saw his job-loss as an opportunity to realize his dream. Through the "grape-vine", he had heard of a space available in Ottawa. Andy thought that moving to Ottawa would be ideal because it was his hometown and he still had a lot of connections. He also knew that Ottawa had many record stores, but that there wasn't a good used record store in town. He believed that if he ran a store that insisted on quality merchandise, it would legitimize his business over other used record stores. At his store, customers could expect to buy good merchandise at half the price of new. With his business knowledge, Andy was able to take out a small loan and set up his store in a prime location in Ottawa's downtown core.

Just before Andy moved into the store, he went out to a bar with his good friends. During that night, one of them asked if he had any doubts about the store's success. Andy replied that he wasn't a person that gambled, but he knew that he could gamble safely on his abilities.

What Happened?

With hard work and determination, he has ran "Spinables" successfully for many years. Andy will be the first to tell you that it has not been an easy career choice. He has sacrificed to achieve his goals, but he couldn't be happier than he is today realizing his dream. It's all he's ever wanted to do. Thinking back to his friends in school who wished they could be like Bobby Hull, Andy feels proud of what he's been able to accomplished. For him, his life now is just like being drafted in the first round and playing in the NHL.

How Andy Deals with Change.



One of the biggest changes in the used record market was the switch in format from vinyl to CDS. When asked how this affected his business, Andy replies that technology has changed his business somewhat, but that a retro-trend for vinyl still is a key market for his business. "Kids today," he adds, "think that vinyl is a novelty... Because no one sells new records, youth come to my store to buy a piece of history." Andy says that his business was able to adapt to the switch in format because he has always responded to what the customer wants. He also stays current, or as Andy like to say, he "keeps his chops up" by reading music "zines", searching on the Net and basically keeping his eyes and ears open. "I can't afford to get old in this business" he says with a grin, "I can't grow up."

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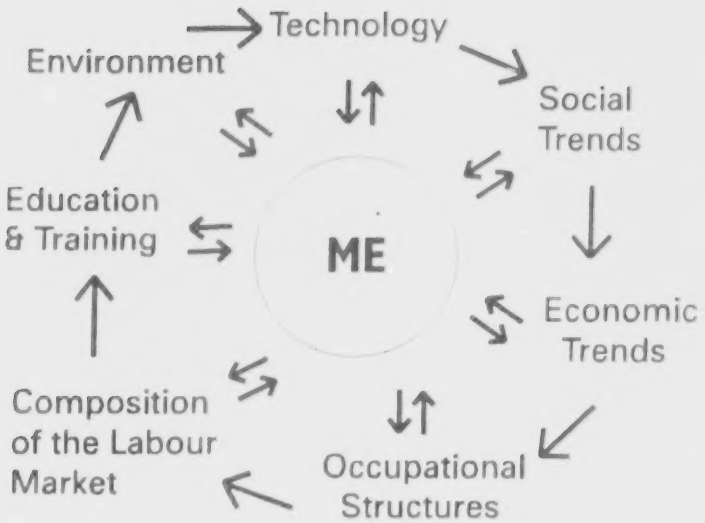
STRUCTURE OF THE LABOUR MARKET



THE 3 P's OF LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

- Print
  - Hard
  - Soft
  - Other Media
- People
  - Information Interviews
- Participate
  - Job Shadow
  - Volunteer
  - Work Experience
  - Paid Employment

10 Things You Love To Do . . .

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

For ❤ Or $

The Expansion Zone

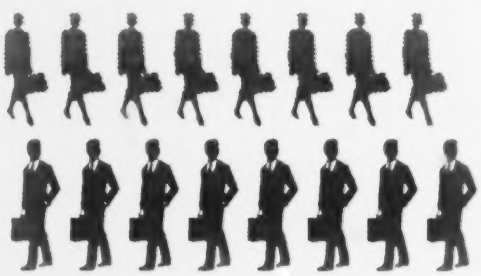
What if Cows Could Talk?

You're at your favourite coffee shop having a cup of java with your friend Betsy who, no pun intended, is a real cow!! How is it possible to be speaking with a Holstein? New technological advances in "La La Land" have now made it possible for cows to talk. As a result of this invention, enormous changes are taking place. What are these changes? Stretch your imagination, put on your Astute Knowledge of the Structure of the Labour Market Hat, take the seven components of the labour market and think of what the impact would be on each component of the labour market. Then, think of all the opportunities that could result from cows talk -- the sky's the limit.

The Impact of Cows Talking

Technology

Composition of the Labour Force



Social Trends

Economic Trends

Occupational Structure

Education and Training

Environment

How might you fit into this scenario? Are there opportunities for you in "La La Land"? Write down all the possibilities no matter how outrageous.

The Real Event

This activity moves from the hypothetical world where cows can talk to a more grounded look at how components of the labour market react to each other and impact on your career development. For example, sports such as hockey are affected by trends and innovations. These changes can result in many spin-offs which in turn impact those that work in the field of recreation. Below are examples of what is currently happening in hockey, the results and a few examples of possible spin-offs. Of course, this list is not complete. Add anything that is missing. Use this list to generate ideas of possible opportunities or changes in the labour market that could arise from these trends. If you don't like hockey, pick another sporting or leisure activity that you enjoy and use the same process to check out how it has changed and think about what the results might be.

What's Currently Happening that's Related to Hockey?

1. Increase in popularity of Roller Blades
2. Girls and women's leagues and world championships
3. The spread of professional hockey in the US
4. Increases in the availability of stats on teams and players

Anything else?

What has Resulted from the Above?

1. Rise in popularity of different forms of hockey (ice, roller, street, summer hockey)
2. New equipment innovations for girls and women playing the sport
3. Co-ed divisions
4. Nike starts making hockey skates
5. More publications and websites listing stats.

More?

Possible Spin-Offs

1. New rules for co-ed divisions
2. With men and women both playing the game, relation-ships could change. (Competitive sports stress marriage counselling?)
3. Hockey as part of the school physical education program for both boys and girls
4. City planning to have better roads to blade on and to have outdoor rinks

And?

Does any of this give you ideas about new opportunities related to hockey?

Zooming Out, Zooming In

To make informed decisions about your career, you need to gather labour market information (LMI) from a variety of sources. You want to get the big picture of what is going on in the world of work (zooming out). But, you also need to be critical about each piece of information you gather. You need to zoom in and ask key questions about this source to decide whether it is reliable and relevant to you or whether you need more information. Below are two activities to help you collect information and question what LMI sources tell you about the world of work and your career path.

Zooming Out

Create a list of all the sources of labour market information that you can think of. Include any that you have used in the past year. Organize your list according to the 3 Ps of LMI, print, people and participation (refer to the BBCF Handout section for descriptions of each one). Try to come up with 5 sources of each. Add to this list as you use and think of other sources of LMI.

Print
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

People
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Participate
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Zooming In

Zooming In is a way of looking at labour market information more closely and critically. You need to know whether the information you gather is reliable. Each piece of information should be examined in terms of context, need and your own critical mind. Don't be afraid to ask questions of even the most well researched and popular beliefs about the labour market. You need feel confident that this information is accurate since you will be using it to understand the "big picture" of what happening in the world of work.

Zooming In – An Example

If you have recently read a magazine, you probably know that they are great sources of print LMI. Imagine that you are interested in the field of nursing and have read an article in *MacLean's* stating that home care facilities will become more important as the Baby Boom generation ages.

How could you verify this information? Who could you ask? What other LMI sources could you turn to? If this information is accurate, what impact could it have on the field of nursing?

Zooming In For Me

Go back to your Zooming Out list and pick one source of LMI for each of the three "P"s (Print, People, Participation). For each source, think of one thing that you have read or heard about with regards to your career interests. Take this piece of LMI and write down three questions and three things that you could do to make sure that this information is accurate.

Questions

1.

2.

3.

What I could do to verify this information?

1.

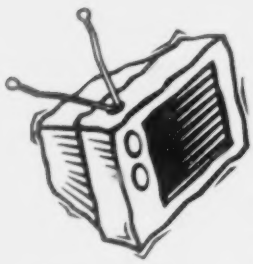
2.

3.

After you have answered the above questions and sought out other ways of testing this information, ask yourself about its reliability. Do you have a sense of the "big picture"? What does your critical mind tell you about this information? Is this information useful to your career interests?

2. The Structure of Opportunity

TVs, Spaceships, and Automobiles



Times change. Ironically, change is one of the great constants of our world. If you interviewed your grandparents or a senior citizen you know and asked them about technological changes in their lifetimes, you would probably hear stories about seeing a car for the first time. Or, perhaps they tell you about what it was like to be watching their new TV when Neil Armstrong first stepped on the moon. Inventions such as cars, space travel and television affect the way people work and the career paths that they take. Occupations that are commonplace today like trucking, broadcasting and aerospace engineering exist because of technological developments. While some occupations become obsolete and disappear, other new career options and opportunities result from economic, social and technological changes.

In today's world of work, shifts and changes are occurring at an alarming rate. Expecting and being positive about shifts in our lives and careers is not easy, especially when these changes mean that we lose something as valuable as a job. In the transitory nature of today's labour market, we need to become "change-skilled."[1] Being "change-skilled" means that you recognize how you personally handle change, you know where your supports are, you keep track of what is going on in the labour market and what is being said about the future. "Change-skilled" also means that you are aware that the labour market is always in a state of flux and that watching for opportunities is a way of being prepared for these changes.

Below are two examples of being "changed-skilled" and watching for opportunities:

Talent Pooling Friends' Skills to Create Opportunity

In 1993, Ruby graduated from the Ontario College of Art. After her graduation, Ruby applied to various museums to work as a guide, an educator and even a coat check person. For various reasons, she was turned down for these positions. Ruby's friend Peter was in a similar

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[1]See Human Resources Planning and Development Section, *"People: The Foundation for Change in the RCMP,"7.*

position. He graduated from the Toronto School of Business and had yet to get a job in his field of marketing. Every marketing firm he applied to had no openings. Needless to say, both Ruby and Peter were frustrated by their job searches and their apparent lack of prospects at finding employment.

One day, Peter was at Ruby's apartment looking at her artwork and her portfolio. Recently, Ruby had won a contract to do a mural on a downtown building. All of their friends raved about Ruby's work. Suddenly, as if Peter had been hit by lightening, he realized that Ruby's and his talent could merge into a business. Ruby's artistic talents combined with Peter's flair for marketing resulted in the perfect skills to build a commercial art studio.

To make Peter's spontaneous idea come alive, they researched the market for commercial and promotional arts in the city. At this time, the use of wall murals in advertising was just beginning. They decided that they would create an advertising firm that specialized in murals. They applied for a small business loan and set up shop soon after its approval.

As their business grew, both Peter and Ruby decided to expand their skill base. Ruby enrolled a computer graphics course which helped her generate images for her murals. Her new media knowledge also combined with her creative talents to open new opportunities for their business.

Today, they have integrated the talents of other friends such as Bob, the techno-wizard. Their business is growing slowly, but steadily. Rudy and Peter are excited by what they are doing and are amazed that they have been able to develop Peter's idea. The opportunity arose without warning, but they were prepared to take advantage of it.

Researching the Labour Market Opens Up New Prospects

Khassi had moved to Canada from her native India just one year ago. In India, she had completed college level training and had several years of experience in accounting. She worked at a small firm and did not have the opportunity to upgrade before coming to Canada. Once here, Khassi found out about a training program which would give her computerized accounting skills. She didn't feel she was very marketable without additional training. A career counsellor asked Khassi to research potential employers to see which courses they recommended. During her investigation, she found an employer who was interested in hiring her and agreed to provide her with some of the training she needed. The rest Khassi got by enrolling in some night courses. The job Khassi got was well above minimum wage and in a company large enough that there was lots of opportunity for career development.

Story was adapted with permission, Elaine O'Reilly and Diane Alfred, Making Sense of Labour Market Information (Ottawa: Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995).

Heart Beats

TIMES, THEY ARE-A-CHANGIN'!

Objectives:

- Explain the changes in educational requirements and skill levels of a variety of occupations
- Demonstrate occupational information gathering skills

Overview:

Technology and other influences are rapidly changing the world of work and occupations as we know them. This exercise gives participants an opportunity to look back at some occupations and see how much they have changed within the last few years.

Method:

1. Divide into small groups of 4-5 participants.
2. Assign each group an occupation that has encountered significant changes. For example:
   - Auto Mechanic
   - General Practitioner
   - Draftsperson
   - Farmer
   - Assembly Line Worker
   - Entrepreneur
   - Secretary
   - Accountant
3. Provide each small group with a flip chart and markers.
4. Have the groups work through each section of the Activity sheet and record their answers on the flip chart paper.
5. Have the groups present their information to the full group. Allow time for discussion.

Suggestions:

- You may wish to repeat this activity, having each small group complete the Activity Sheet based on an occupation of their choice.
- You may take this activity a step further and have participants interview people in these occupations to find out what it was like ten years ago, what it is like today, and what it will be like in the future.

Activity Sheet

Occupation: _____

Twenty Years Ago	Today	Twenty Years From Now
Duties:	Duties:	Duties:
Skill/Education level:	Skill/Education level:	Skill/Education level:

Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Career Awareness* – Teachers's Guide and Activities. Carol Dunford. Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta.

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BBCF Handout (for use in group program)

STEPS

1. Is it a fad? Trend? Megatrend? What are the roots? How deep? How long? How many?

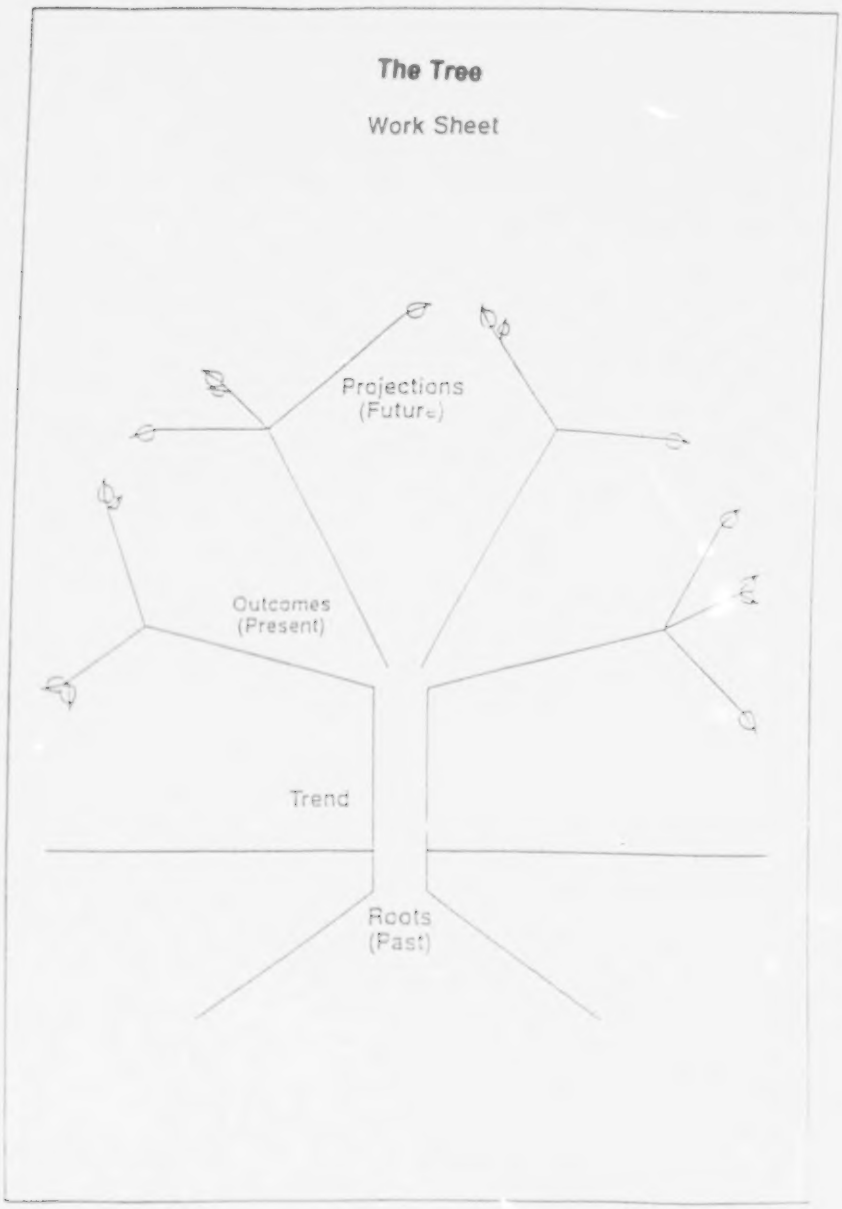
2. What are the branches? What demands for goods and services are already visible?

3. What are the buds? What demands can you imagine? Be outrageous!

4. What is the status in your own community? Is it being done? Overdone? Not yet done?

5. How might you make a contribution? How does it match your abilities, skills, interests?

BBCF Handout (for use in group program)



Source: Steady As We Go: A counselling program for career drifters, by Mildred Cahill and Sandra Martland, Lugus Publications Ltd., 1994.

The Expansion Zone

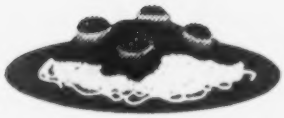
A Day in the Life

To get a sense of how the labour market changes over time, interview someone you know who has been working for 20 years or more. Ask them about what a work-day might have been like for them 20 years ago and then contrast it with their work-day now. Ask them to give you a description of their job then and now. If they are still with the same organization, has it changed? How was their organization structured? How many hours a week did they work? What, if anything, is different about their work today?

Before conducting the interview, draw up a list of questions that will help the person you're interviewing tell their story about what work was like and how it has changed. Take notes and after the interview record your observations about the past and present day's world of work. As you reflect on the career history of your interviewee, what stayed the same and what changed? Did they raise any issues that relates to your experiences in your own career?

Observations:

Using Your Noodle



Whether you swim or not, you may have seen those multi-coloured foam tubes at various stores, by the pool or at the cottage. If you have never seen these "pool noodles", try to imagine thick pieces of brightly coloured giant spaghetti floating in a pool or a lake. They really do exist and they are used to keep afloat while you swim. The interesting thing about these noodles is that their original purpose is far removed from their current popular use as floatation devices.

Long before they showed up in the water, these foam tubes were used to insulate pipes in every building in every cold weather town and city. It took someone to "use their noodle", so to speak, to discover another way to use these tubes. One can only imagine how that person's working life has changed from insulating pipes to an entrepreneur/inventor and (probably very successful) business person!

Creating a floatation device from a pipe insulator is an example of what can happen when we think of alternative ways to use the tools that we rely on in our working and daily lives. Sometimes we can be staring opportunity right in the face. Creative and critical thinking can sometimes create a real opportunity.

Write down on one side of the paper five tools and devices that you use everyday (computers, pens, toothbrushes, soap). On the other side of the page, write down three alternative uses and possibilities for each one of these tools. Be creative, stretch the limits of your imagination and don't worry if its unrealistic because imagining a floating noodle from a foam pipe covering must have seemed silly at first!

Tools	Other Uses

52

Detective Sniff and the Opportunity Caper

It was a dark and brainstormy night. You have been give a secret undecoded file of a major trend. You have been asked to decode it:

- state what the trend is;
- discover how it is making its mark on your community;
- find out what goods and services have developed from it;
- uncover what is missing (or what opportunities could arise from this trend);
- and, think about how you might contribute to this trend using your interests and abilities.

By using the decoder exercise below, your LMI informants (wink, wink) and your expert investigative abilities, you are able to decode trends and sniff opportunities with *007 pizzazz!!*

LMI Decoding

Pick any social, political or economic trend (for example, globalization, the increases in health consciousness, virtual reality, rising greenhouse gas emissions, the move to homecare etc.). Use the three sources of labour market information (print, people and participation), your research skills and your creativity to answer the following "decoding" questions. If you are having trouble deciding upon a trend, use a newspaper or magazine to help you get started. Feel free to add more questions that will help you uncover possible work opportunities.

1. What is the trend? Where did it come from? Is it here to stay?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What goods and services have developed because of this trend? Are there examples of people already providing goods and services related to this trend?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. If you believe that this trend will take off, are there any additional goods and services that might be in demand which aren't available currently? Are there any gaps in products and/or services? What might people meed in order to help them manage this trend? What demands can you imagine? Stretch your imagination!

4. What is the status of the trend and its related products/services in your community? Is anything being done? Overdone? Are there any unmet needs (ie. opportunities to develop a product or service) related to this trend?

5. How might you contribute? How does it match your abilities, skills and interests?

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3. Accessing Labour Market Information

How People Look For Work

In the past, how have you looked for work? How did you find your last job? The diagram below shows how people typically look for work and how employers tend to fill positions.

How People Look for Work

1. Want Ads
2. Employment Agencies (Public & Private)
3. Placement Agencies
4. Word of Mouth (Contact Network)
5. Direct Contact - Employers

6. Want Ads
5. Employment Agencies (Public & Private)
4. Placement Agencies
3. External Networks
2. Job Posting
1. Internal Networks

How Employers Fill Jobs

You'll notice that the two are completely opposite. It's no wonder that finding work sometimes feels impossible. Maybe its a case of looking in the wrong places. How could you enhance your work search? Where would be the best place to begin?

This section of the **Portfolio Builder** has ideas and activities on developing your networks and building new ways of finding labour market information.

What Makes a Star?

Star athletes such as Donovan Bailey, Myriam Bédard and Elvis Stojko possess great talents and abilities. When we watch them attain their goals, we often focus on them and their incredible abilities. Yet, if we looked behind the scenes, we would see a team of professionals, friends and family helping the athlete become a star. We often ignore the coaches, trainers, equipment specialists, business managers, friends and family that enable an athlete to pursue their dreams. No one reaches dreams alone. Chances are that you already have a team of people who are close to you -- your friends and family. They are a tremendous resource of information and support -- all there for the asking.

Building a strong team or network takes time, care and organization. Start with those close to you then build out. There are a number of activities in the Expansion Zone to help you get started.

Different people will be able to provide different kinds of assistance. Therefore, your network will expand and contract as your visions and goals change. Your career development is not a one person show; build a team that will help you meet your goals.

Six Degrees of Separation

People used the expression "it's a small world" before the information highway and telecommunication changed our world into a "Global Village." The idea that we are all connected in some way is the subject of John Guare's play, *Six Degrees of Separation*. The premise of this drama was that everyone on Earth can be connected using six associations or less. With the development of the Internet, chances are that we will become even more interconnected. It is no wonder that the Internet- based movie trivia game, *Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon*, has a cult following. This on-line database has tied Bacon to over 240,000 other actors, living or dead, including Spike Lee, E.T. and Elvis Presley. Take Elvis Presley for example. Elvis Presley was in the movie, *King Creole* (1958) with Walter Matthau who was in the movie, *JFK* (1991), with Kevin Bacon. If Elvis had lived, Kevin Bacon could be sipping ice tea with the King! Now, that's a network!!!

Creating a wide network is important in helping us find where work opportunities exist. Many of us have found jobs through who we know and who we know knows. Casting a wider net by asking our friends about their networks or by doing information interviews, enables you to build a network that could branch out six degrees and beyond.

Skills Of Information Interviewing

- Building Rapport
- Asking Open Questions
- Summarizing
- Feedback

Rules Of Feedback

Immediate - here and now

Descriptive - as opposed to evaluative

Positive - constructive

Specific - as opposed to vague

"I" - (my perspective)

Information Interviewing

3 Things you - know well
- can speak about

Interviewer

1. Choose topic that most genuinely interest you.
2. Take time to prepare your questions (use your Portfolio)
3. Focus on practising skills
   - Building rapport
   - Open questioning
   - Summarizing

Interviewee

After the interview, take time to give the interviewer feedback re: the use of the 3 skills. What helped?

- Rules of Feedback
- Timekeeper

58

The Expansion Zone

Finding the Roots of Your Network

A network functions a lot like the effect of throwing a rock in a pond. Each contact you make can have a "ripple" effect across your career path. Networks are developed for personal and professional reasons. We all have "natural networks" -- our friends, family and role models that supply us with information and support us when we need it. They are the first "ripple" of your network and a great starting point to begin building a wider network.

The first step in developing your network is to identify who is at its core. The diagram below helps you develop a list of people who are at the centre of your personal and professional network. Write their names in the appropriate circle and make sure that you have a list of their names and contact information in an accessible place.

Over the next months, add to this network list as you make new contacts or think of others that you have yet to write down.

Accessing Your Net

Your network has probably already provided you with a wealth of labour market and career information. Although we're often not aware of it at the time, we are constantly picking up pieces of useful information from our daily contracts. Now that you have completed a list of your immediate network, think of what you could ask them about the labour market and careers. Does someone you know own their own business? Does one of your peers have a great job that you would like to know more about? Could anyone in your core network give you some advice about making a career move? Is there anyone in your network that could give you some instruction or help you develop a skill?

Your network can help you access labour market information through four main routes[2]:

Advice: Look for people who can advise about career decisions. People who have been through the experience (eg. graduated from a program you are considering) are more than likely, when asked, to give you the "inside scoop."

Instruction: Find people who are willing to help you develop a new skill that you want or need to know. Whether it is wood-working or word-processing, your network can be a great source for skill development.

Connections: Think about people in your network who could connect you with other key contacts. This is where the ripple effect sets in. Remember, the 6 Degrees of Separation? Whatever you're looking for, it is probably already out there and accessible through your network.

Information: Identify those who you want to ask about their careers or who could pass on information about the labour market that you would have difficulty obtaining on your own.

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[2]See Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, *Radical Change* (Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, 1996), p. 85.

For each of the four main routes of accessing labour market information, write down something that you want to know. Then, pick one person from your network that could be approached for this information.

Advice	Instruction
I'm looking for some advice about...	I would like some help to learn...
Who's in my network that can help me:	Who's in my network that can help me:
Connections	**Information**
I'm looking for someone who...	I'd like some information on...
Who's in my network that can help me:	Who's in my network that can help me:

Network Inventory

A network is meant to be "worked." It is essential to have some method of keeping track of contacts, both with your core and your expanded network.

Address books, notebooks and 5"x7" cards are three ways to keep track of network contacts. In addition to basic contact information, you can record the dates and the results of your meetings and steps for follow-up. Below is a sample "tracking" card that you can use or adapt.

Network Tracking Card

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Relationship: _____

Purpose of Meeting: _____

_____

Date of Contract: _____

_____

Results: _____

_____

Other Possible Contracts: _____

_____

Follow-Up: _____

_____

Other Meetings: _____

_____

Try to get into the habit of keeping your list of contacts current and organized in a way that you can retrieve this information when you need it. By getting into this habit, you'll have a personalized resource at your finger tips to help you "Access Your Allies".

62

Career News You Can Use Through Interviews

A great way to expand your network and access labour market information is to conduct information interviews. Information interviews help you find out about jobs/careers that interest you by talking to people who work in or represent that field. It is one of the best ways to learn about the "real world" of a particular occupation or field. You can ask questions like:

- what is the work and lifestyle like?
- what are the joys and the pitfalls from an "insider's" point of view?
- what kinds of education or training do you need?
- what kinds of opportunities might open up in the future?

After you conduct an interview you may discover that this job is not what you thought it would be. When you make career decisions this is an excellent way to check and make sure that you choose the right path. It is also a great way to make valuable contacts, get tips on finding a job, or discover possibilities that you maybe hadn't considered.

The Eight Steps to Information Interviews

Step 1: Identify the job/career or area of interest you want to learn about

Step 2: Identify who to interview (who can best help you get "the inside story")

Step 3: Plan the specific questions you want to ask

Step 4: Learn about and practise the skills of interviewing

Step 5: Arrange for the interview

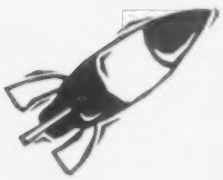
Step 6: Conduct the interview

Step 7: Follow up on the interview

Step 8: Reflect on your learning

Information Interviewing: Assessing Yourself

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to conduct an information interview. Below is your check list. Look it over to see if your ready to depart on your mission.



All set !	Needs work	Information Interviewing: Assessing Yourself Please rate yourself below.
—	—	1. I know the job/area of interest that I want to investigate.
—	—	2. I can identify who to interview.
—	—	3. I have a good list of questions to ask.
—	—	4. I know the skills I need to interview well, have practiced them and feel good about my readiness to interview.
—	—	5. I'm clear about what to do to set up the interview and am prepared for all kinds of responses.
—	—	6. I'm ready to conduct the interview.
—	—	7. I know the steps involved in following-up after the interview and am ready to do them.
—	—	8. I have a process in place to reflect on what I've learned.

The areas I need more information on are:

Step 1: Identifying the job/career or area of interest you want to learn about

Information Interviewing can be helpful at any stage in your career planning. You can gather information to:

- get a sense of what the job you are interested in might be like;
- obtain specific information about the training required for a particular occupation;
- verify that what you know about a particular occupation is accurate.

* If you have no idea what career possiblities you'd like to investigate, it may not be the time of Information Interviewing.

Step 2: Identifying who to interview

Deciding who to approach to best help you get "the inside story" can be a challenge. Here are some ideas:

* To develop leads, start with your family, friends and acquaintances (your core network). Ask them, "Who do you know who works as a . . ." or "Who knows about . . . ?"

* Let everyone know what you're interested in learning about and ask for names of people they know. It's especially helpful to talk to people like doctors, ministers or store clerks who are in contact with lots of other people. This will give you a whole new network of contacts.

* Read the business section of your local newspaper(s) and research the companies and organizations you learn about there. Check your public and/or school library.

* Once you have your first Information Interview and still want to learn more, it's a good idea to ask the person you're interviewing whether there's anyone else they'd suggest you talk to.

Step 3: Planning the specific questions you want to ask

This is the key focus (or "heart") of the Information Interview and there are many approaches you can take.

* On your own or with a friend, make a list of all the questions you can think of that you might like to ask. Then choose the ones that stand out as most important and put them in the order you'd like to ask them.

* Create a form that contains the questions you want to ask with enough space between to write the interviewee's answers. Below is one example of an information interview form. You may wish to use this as your base and add questions to it.

Information Interviewing Questions*

Name of the occupation, field, job or other topic you are interviewing the person about:

_____

1. What do you like MOST about this occupation, job or field?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. What do you like LEAST about it?

   _____

   _____

3. What kinds of training or education does someone need?

   _____

   _____

4. If you were going to do it all over again, what would you do differently?

   _____

   _____

5. Can you think of anyone else it would be good for me to talk to?

_____

_____

6. Would it be okay if I told them you suggested them as a contact?

_____

_____

Thanks for taking the time to talk to me today! It's been really helpful!

*** Adapted and used with permission from the program entitled, Knowledge for Youth About Careers (KYAC), published by Matrix Interactive Video Systems.**

Step 4: Learning about and practising the skills of interviewing

The skills used in information interviewing are similar to the kinds of questions you ask your friends and family everyday. If you want to draw out information from someone, what types of questions do you use? Are they questions that are answered with a yes or a no? Or, do you ask questions where the respondent has to use a least a sentence to answer? Do you clarify with the person that you have understood them correctly by rephrasing what they have just said? If you answered "yes" to the last two questions, you are well on your way to developing the skills for information interview. Below are descriptions of two of the most used skills in interviewing.

a) Open-ended questioning

As the interviewer, you will play an important role in "steering" the direction of the interview. One of the main ways you'll do this is through the use of questions. Most of the time, you'll want to use **open-ended questions**, rather than closed questions. A closed question is usually one that requests specific information, resulting in a "yes", "no" or other short answer. Open-ended questions, by contrast, open up discussion by getting the person to tell you about or describe something. They often begin with the words "what" or "how" (for example, "What's your favourite part of the job?" or "How did you first get interested in this field?").

b) **Paraphrasing**

The skill of **paraphrasing** basically involves giving back to the other person in your own words what you understood them to say. There are two main purposes of paraphrasing:

1) Paraphrasing shows the person that you are listening and wanting to understand or clarify what they are saying.

2) Paraphrasing helps you to check for yourself whether you understood correctly.

Paraphrasing is important, but should not be over-used or you will sound like you are "parroting" the other person. You should use this skill most when you are genuinely wanting to clarify your understanding of what the person has said.

Idea

Practice Makes Perfect

One way to practice your interviewing skills is to talk to someone in your community whom you may not know extremely well. To ease into this gently, try interviewing a friend or family member about something they do that you're genuinely interested in. Draw up a list of questions and proceed. When you feel ready to interview someone in your community, schedule an interview (see Step 5). Craft a list of questions that you are dying to ask this person, schedule the interview and have fun!!

68

Step 5: Arranging for the interview

To arrange an interview, contact the person (and/or their assistant) and set up an appointment -- that is, agree on the date, time and place. You can do this in one of the following ways:

a) Write a letter and follow up with a phone call
b) Contact the person by phone only, or
c) Go to see the person.

Whichever your approach, you'll want to:

- Let them know why you want to talk with them.

  This could be as simple as saying, "I think I might be interested in becoming a mechanic. I would like to make an appointment to talk to you about the work, what you think the future opportunities might be, and what kind of education I would need to get into the field."

- Be clear about how much of their time you would like.

  Half an hour should be enough to cover the essentials, but you can test this out for yourself to see how much time you need. It's important to respect the other person by staying within the time you've set or, if necessary, negotiating for a few more minutes or a separate time to follow up. You might say, for example, "I notice we're about out of time. I have just one more question. Would it be OK if I asked it to you now or should I get back to you later."

- Make it convenient for the person you are interviewing.

  Most people aren't prepared to "drop everything" to see you on the same or next day. Usually, it's best to give the other person and yourself a few days of "lead time." Since they are doing you a favour by offering you some of their time and energy for an interview, you may need to be the one that goes out of your way in making arrangements that are convenient to them.

- **Handling "Rejection"**

Many people who are asked to participate in an interview and pass on some of their knowledge and skills are very pleased to do so. However, it may happen sometimes that, when you contact someone, they won't respond in the most warm and positive way. On such occasions, it is very important that you don't take "rejections" personally, because chances are that person's actions have very little, if anything, to do with you!

Rude or negative responses can occur for many reasons other than the nature of your call. Negative reactions can even be viewed positively! If you discover that a person is particularly rude or negative on the phone, you may want to avoid situations where you are working with that person face-to-face on a day-to-day basis. Besides, the world is made up of all kinds of people and doing your best in dealing with people who are difficult is good practice in learning to fine-tune your "people skills."

So, what do you want to learn about? Who do you want to interview first? Is there someone in your core network that you want to start with? Look back to the Assessment List of Your Core Network. You could pick someone who you listed in this chart. Draw up a plan for when and how you will arrange for this interview.

70

Step 6: Conducting the interview – A Few Pointers

* It will be important to "establish rapport" with the person you are interviewing to set a positive tone. This starts in the "getting warmed up" phase at the beginning of the interview. It may be as simple as thanking the person for taking the time to meet with you, commenting on something you like in their office, or saying something like, "It's exciting for me to have a chance to learn from you about [whatever it is]! I have known about your work for some time through..." But don't be phony or make it sound like you're just "buttering up" the person. Be genuine--the real you.

* It's a good idea to learn as much ahead of time as you can. Do your homework. Research the organization or occupation you're going to be interviewing the person about.

* Having written questions to refer to is important, to keep you focussed. Once a person starts "telling their story", if you don't have any notes, you may forget entirely what you were hoping to find out about.

* If you begin to get nervous, focus on really listening to the other person instead of on yourself and what you're going to say next. Remember: Most people love to talk about themselves!

* Taking notes during the interview is also a good idea, because chances are you'll want the information for reference later. It also shows that you're interested and value what the person is providing.

* Respect the time line you have agreed to for the interview.

* Leave open the possibility of a follow-up visit or call, if necessary.

* Be sure to thank the person for their time and the information.

Step 7: Following up on the interview

After the interview, it's a good idea to write a short follow-up letter thanking the person for their time and the information. They would probably also appreciate knowing if anything of importance happened after the interview related to the points you discussed. You may also have a specific request or question you want to pursue with the person after the interview, which they will usually be happy to respond to. You don't need to go on and on, but most people really appreciate some recognition of their efforts after the fact.

Step 8: Reflecting on your learning

- **Points to ponder**

Although this appears as the "final" stage of Information Interviewing, you, in fact, need to be doing it all along, if you are to benefit from each of the steps you take. The point here is to ask yourself reflective questions such as the following:

- How did I do?
- What did I like best about what I did?
- Did I find out what I wanted to know?
- Is there anything I'd change for next time?

After an Information Interview, it's helpful to ask yourself or discuss with someone:

- How does what I learned fit with my previous research?
- Are the work environments in this occupation appealing to me?
- What about the tasks?
- What is the employment outlook? Is this an area to explore further?
- What should my next steps be?
- How could I use this information in looking for a job or work placement?

Remember:

* Taking time to reflect on your learning can make all the difference in continuing to grow and improve.

* A journal can be a really useful ally in this process. It can be very valuable in your reflections "after the fact" and can help you see how far you've come!

* Celebrate your successes and take the time you need. Your future is worth the investment.

This section on Information Interviewing was adapted with permission from SchoolNet Career Centre: Student Centre

4. Employability Skills

Why Employability Skills are Important

The world of work has changed dramatically. In the past twenty years, occupations such as type-setting have disappeared while occupations in desktop publishing have appeared. The pace of change is becoming more rapid and many futurists believe that many of the careers that will exist twenty years from now have not even been invented yet. So, how can you develop your career in this climate of constant change?

This is where the idea of employability skills comes in. What is employability? Actually, it's two words in one:

Employability = employ + ability

Employability is the ability to be employed in different jobs and workplaces. When you connect this idea with a skill set (employability skills), it means that you have the basic skills needed to function effectively at work, no matter what kind of work you're doing. More and more, employers are hiring those people who have a general set of academic, personal management and teamwork skills that will help them be flexible enough to take on a number of different tasks. In today's world of work, a definitive job description will increasingly be a thing of the past. More and more jobs in the future will require good generalists -- those that can take on multi-problem positions by using an unconventional combination of skills.[3]

Of course, employability (academic, personal management and teamwork) skills are applied differently depending on the type of work you do. Think of the difference in how speaking skills are used by someone working as an animal trainer, as compared to someone like a politician or a stand-up comic who makes speeches for a living. Speaking skills are essential to all these jobs, but are used very differently.

This section was adapted with permission from SchoolNet: Career Centre, "The Student Centre."

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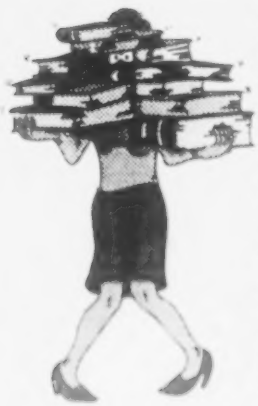
[3]See William Charland, *Career Shifting: Starting Over in a Changing Economy* (Mass Bob Adams, Inc, 1993)

'Soft Skill' Sets for Different Sectors

Various jobs and tasks require that you have specific employability skills. The communication skills used in animal training, marketing and computer programming are completely different and based on the particular requirements of the tasks for each occupation. 'Soft skills' or self management skills are becoming important employability skills in today's changing world of work. Generic self-management skills enable you to be flexible and adaptable to change, to take initiative to solve problems and to be prepared to work as part of a team. As 'soft skills' become more and more important, many industries are asking for specific self management skills for their field. For example, employers in the telecommunications field want workers who are well rounded, committed to self development, have intellectual curiosity and are patient in an uncertain work environment. Employers in the environmental industry want people with excellent presentation and teaching skills as well as an ability to deal with confrontational situations. However, in the dairy processing industry, employers look for workers who can work on multi-disciplinary teams and who can speak a second language.[4]



In the Expansion Zone, you will have the opportunity to examine and assess your employability skills - including your 'soft skills'. After you have done this, the next step in your skills assessment is to take your field(s) of interest and find out what specific skills are needed in this industry. In today's labour market, you need to be aware of your generic employability skills as well as the skills specific to your field(s) of choice. Researching and accessing information are two ways of finding out what skills are needed in certain occupations. Both of these methods are highlighted and explained in the Expansion Zone.

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[4]Janis Foord Kirk, "'Soft Skills' more important than ever," Ottawa Citizen, November 25, 1997

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROFILE: The Critical Skills Required of the Canadian Workforce

Academic Skills

Those skills which provide the basic foundation to get, keep and progress on a job and to achieve the best results.

Canadian employers need a person who can:

Communicate
- Understand and speak the languages in which business is conducted
- Listen to understand and learn
- Read, comprehend and use written materials, including graphs, charts and displays
- Write effectively in the languages in which business is conducted

Think
- Think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions
- Understand and solve problems involving mathematics and use the results
- Use technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively
- Access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (e.g., skilled trades, technology, physical sciences, arts and social sciences)

Learn
- Continue to learn for life

Personal Management Skills

The combination of skills, attitudes and behaviours required to get, keep and progress on a job and to achieve the best results.

Canadian employers need a person who can demonstrate:

Positive Attitudes and Behaviours
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Honesty, integrity and personal ethics
- A positive attitude toward learning, growth and personal health
- Initiative, energy and persistence to get the job done

Responsibility
- The ability to set goals and priorities in work and personal life
- The ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals
- Accountability for actions taken

Adaptability
- A positive attitude toward change
- Recognition of and respect for people's diversity and individual differences
- The ability to identify and suggest new ways to get the job done – creativity

Teamwork Skills

Those skills needed to work with others on a job and to achieve the best results.

Canadian employers need a person who can:

Work with Others
- Understand and contribute to the organization's goals
- Understand and work within the culture of the group
- Plan and make decisions with others and support the outcomes
- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group
- Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results
- Seek a team approach as appropriate
- Lead when appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance

The Conference Board of Canada

This document was developed by the Employability Skills Forum, a project of the National Business and Education Centre, The Conference Board of Canada.

This profile outlines foundation skills for employability. For individuals looking for work or employability is one of several goals, all of which are important for success.

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Employability Skills Profile: What Are Employers Looking For?

READ EACH SKILL, EVALUATE YOURSELF AND MARK THE MOST APPROPRIATE

1. Academic Skills

Communication

- Listen to, understand and learn

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Read, comprehend, and use written materials including graphs, charts, and displays

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Write effectively in the languages in which business is conducted

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

Think

- Think critically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information - Facilitator Guide*. Adrienne Chan. Canadian Career Development Foundation, Human Resources Development Canada, Province of British Columbia, 1995.

- Understand and solve problems involving mathematics and use the results

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Use technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (e.g., skilled trades, arts, social sciences)

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

Learn

- Continue to learn for life

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

2. Personal Management Skills

Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

- Self-esteem and confidence

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information - Facilitator Guide*. Adrienne Chan. Canadian Career Development Foundation. Human Resources Development Canada, Province of British Columbia, 1995.

- Honesty, integrity, and personal ethics

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- A positive attitude toward learning, growth, and personal health

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Initiative, energy and persistence to get the job done

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

Responsibility

- The ability to set goals and priorities on work and personal life

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- The ability to plan and manage time, money, and resources to achieve goal

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information - Facilitator Guide*. Adrienne Chan. Canadian Career Development Foundation. Human Resources Development Canada, Province of British Columbia, 1995

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- Accountability for actions taken

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ☐ Yes ☐ No

Adaptability

- A positive attitude toward change

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Recognition of and respect for people's diversity and individual differences

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ☐ Yes ☐ No

- The ability to identify and suggest new ideas to get the job done-creativity

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Work with Others

- Understand and contribute to the organization's goals

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information - Facilitator Guide*. Adrienne Chan Canadian Career Development Foundation. Human Resources Development Canada, Province of British Columbia, 1995

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81

- Understand and work with the culture of the group

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Plan and make decisions with others in the group

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

- Lead when appropriate; mobilizing the group for high performance

1	2	3	4	5
Weak	Low	Average	Good	Very Good

I would like to do some work in this area ❒ Yes ❒ No

Adapted from Employability Skills Profile: What Are Employers Looking For? Conference Board of Canada

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information - Facilitator Guide*. Adrienne Chan. Canadian Career Development Foundation. Human Resources Development Canada; Province of British Columbia. 1995

82

Expansion Zone

Task, Skills and Attributes

In the BBCF handout section, you are introduced to one method of assessing your employability skills. Another way to look at your skills is to break down your previous work experiences (paid or unpaid) in terms of these three basic elements: the tasks that you performed, the skills required and the attributes that enabled you to work effectively.[5] Take, for example, driving a taxi cab.

Tasks	Skills	Attributes
- Driving customers to destinations - Handling money - Scheduling Pick-ups	- Driving - Knowledge of the city (quick routes to take) - Math (make change) - Organization - Communication (ensuring that you obtain correct information, establish a rapport with customers)	- the ability to work independently - good judgment of safety issues including driving and customers - the willingness to work flex hours - sensitivity to customer needs - patience

Think back and write down your last work experiences (both paid and unpaid). Imagine that you are hiring someone as your replacement for these projects or positions. Then, write down every task that the person would need to perform in the course of a week and think of the skills and attributes associated with each task. Use the chart above as a model and use as much paper as necessary to breakdown three of your last work experiences.

Take some time to reflect on your charts. Are there any patterns of skills or attributes that are repeated across your different work experiences? Were you able to identify any skills that you hadn't thought of before?

Make a list of the skills and attributes that you think are your strongest and/or that you feel will be most useful to you in your career direction.

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[5] See William Charland, *Career Shifting: Starting Over in a Changing Economy* (Mass Bob Adams, 1993)

IDEA #1
Take a Chance!

After you have assessed your skills, take your list to someone you trust (friend or family member) and ask them to examine your assessment and give you feedback. Ask if they need any clarification or if there is anything they see missing from your list. Take notes from your discussion and reflect on the that process went. Were you surprised by anything in your discussion?

You may also want to ask a past or present employer for feedback on your employability skills. This takes a great deal of courage, so use your safety judgment. By asking an employer for feedback, you are well on your way to developing good career self-management skills.

IDEA # 2

Using Your Assesment On Your Résumé

After you have completed this exercise, think of how you would include this information on your resume. On a skill-based résumé, the skills common to each of your past work experiences can be highlighted in a list of qualifications. Skills that you listed as your strongest or most relevant to your career direction can become headings. Under each heading, you can list the task where you successfully used this particular skill. For example, the taxi driver in the task, skills, attributes activity could write on their résumé under the heading of communication that they established a rapport with clients, were sensitive to clients needs and ensured that they obtained correct information before departure. On separate pieces of paper, write down the skills you want to highlight on your résumé and then below each skill write in point form the tasks and attributes as evidence of your skill development in this area.

IDEA #3

Visioning Your Future in the Want Ads

This is a "clip and paste" activity to help you recognize the skills you need as you think about your future career goals. To get ideas about your career future, look in the Career Section of a major city paper (available in any local library). In this section, there will be several postings of a range of jobs in various fields. These can give you an indication of the skills you would need to obtain these positions. Look periodically at this section and clip out any positions that appeals to you.

Highlight or underline the skills required for these positions. Compare this list to the skills you have. Write down the skills you need to develop if you were to apply for this position. Your goals and ideas for you career future will change, so keep adding to this list often. Take the time to write down what you think it would be like when you have reached the goal of obtaining these skills. What would it be like to get a job in this field and how do you see yourself building on this success?

Opportunities in the Labour Market Checklist

✓ Check the statements that apply to you.

- ❑ I have basic knowledge of how the labour market is structured.
- ❑ I can see opportunities for me in the labour market.
- ❑ I have an idea of how work opportunities are created.
- ❑ I can use my research skills to "sniff" for opportunity.
- ❑ I can identify several sources of print, people and participation LMI.
- ❑ I know how to use this information to explore career opportunities.
- ❑ I know who is at the core of my network.
- ❑ I know the steps of information interviewing and have practised them.
- ❑ I know what employability skills are.
- ❑ I can assess my own skills and I am able to present them positively to potential employers.

Skills Alert!

The activities in the Expansion Zone of Opportunities in the Labour Market helped you develop:

- ways to think critically about the labour market
- research skills
- imagination and creativity skills
- networking skills
- self-assessment skills
- interviewing skills
- practice at receiving feedback

Write down one way that you have used each of the above skills through the exercises in the **Portfolio Builder**.

Opportunities For Me

This section of the Portfolio Builder includes the following topics:

1. Values

Introduction
* What Are Values?

BBCF Handouts
* Four Metaphors
* Work Value Items
* Where Have We Come From?

The Expansion Zone
* Onion Rings
* "If You Had a Million Dollars"
* Working Through Work Messages
* "Recently, Stared in ..."
* Packing Your Values Suitcase

2. Dependable Strengths

Introduction
* Strengths Aren't Just for Heroes Anymore
* Andy's Fifth Gear

BBCF Handouts
* Noting Dependable Strengths and Skills

The Expansion Zone
* Everyday Success Stories

3. Mapping

Introduction
* Going Full Circle

BBCF Handouts
* Mapping - Option 1
* Mapping - Option 2

The Expansion Zone
* Taking Off in One Direction

4. Career/Life Project

Introduction
* The Butterfly's Wings

BBCF Handouts
* Career/Life Statement
* Career/Life Statement Extended

The Expansion Zone
* Your Mission Statement

1. Values

What Are Values?

We all have a system of beliefs that shape our life choices and career goals. Often, the things that matter most to us are a reflection of what we value. A value can be described as a firmly held belief that governs our most meaningful preferences and fundamental choices. There are many ways to define values. In the Portfolio Builder, a value is presented as something that:

- guides our behaviours and our actions and is often so naturally a part of who we are that they function outside our awareness;
- expresses convictions that hold great importance and meaning in our lives;
- is not a simple and straightforward set of rules that we constantly follow; they tend to be complex and they sometimes even compete with each other.

Values are powerful forces in our lives. When our actions are guided or in-line with our values we often get the sense that we are doing something that "feels right." Many times our actions reaffirm our values. Values often lie at the "core" of who we are and tend to stick with us. However, values can change with life experience.

Because values have an enduring quality, its important to examine them from time to time to see if they fit with who we are and who we want to be. In the Expansion Zone, there are several activities to help you examine your values and how they are related to your beliefs, interests, and skills. What we value can have an effect on our career decisions and actions. Being aware of our beliefs and values can be useful in examining the influences steering our career decisions.

BBCF Handout (for use in group program)

METAPHORS OF THE FUTURE

BBCF Handout: Values

Roller Coaster

MIGHTY RIVER

Great Ocean

COLLOSAL DICE GAME

WHICH ONE?

1. Roller Coaster
2. Mighty River
3. Great Ocean
4. Collosal Dice Game
5. Other?

Why?

Work Value Items	
To acquire a blank cheque for a year's travel around the world.	
To be president of a large corporation.	
To help blind children learn how to read Braille.	
To be an executive member of a popular club in your community.	
To work at a job with freedom from the control of others.	
To win a million-dollar lottery.	
To be responsible for the well-being of a group of employees.	
To work at a job that your conscience tells you is "right" for you.	
To be in a position to protect the rights of all people.	
To be able to work regular hours, five days a week.	
To live on a tropical island where conditions never change.	
To do something creative at work on a regular basis.	
To be able to control your time and work schedule.	
To direct the work of 10 employees.	
To be considered an expert in your occupational field.	
To represent a company by travelling to Asia and Europe.	
To do work that benefits society as a whole.	
To be voted outstanding person of the year in your province.	
To bring a debt-ridden company back to financial success.	
To earn $ 85,000 a year.	
To become famous.	
To help needy, deprived people.	
To find a cure for cancer.	
To work with people you like.	

Source: *CareerWorld*. John G. Freeman and Mary Balanchuck. Trifolium Books Inc., 1994

Participant Directions for Small Group Work:
Where Have We Come From?

a. Discuss the messages/information you received in your youth about work from your parents, peers, teachers, guidance counsellors, books, libraries, etc.

b. Group members may have extremely different experiences. All points of view should be represented during the discussion.

c. Use the following categories to stimulate discussion.

men & work
family life & work
women & work
work ethic
work & education
the young worker
the older worker
trades vs. professions
management (the boss)
work structures (like part-time, casual, hourly vs. salary)

Try not to limit your discussion to these above categories only: feel free to explore any areas that relate.

d. Choose a recorder who will write all ideas on flip chart paper

e. Choose a spokesperson who will summarize your small group findings with the larger group.

4. Each group records their findings and reports out to the larger group.

5. Using the flip chart findings as a basis for discussion, explore the following:

- similarities and differences between messages
- the messages and information that denote work values/beliefs
- how these may have affected actual behavior and choices in work-related activities
- the messages and information that are/are not applicable given today's world.

> Be sensitive to participants' emotional reactions, such as a sense of loss, perhaps, resulting from changes in work values. It is important to acknowledge and normalize the emotional and human impact of these workplace changes. Discussion about what is right or wrong, fair or unfair about changing values may sometimes ensue. Participants may need to be reminded that the workshop is designed to inform and prepare them to manoever in the changing workplace, not to debate the merits of social change.

6. In the workbook, have participants complete these three sections:
   What values, beliefs and attitudes about work were emphasized in my youth?
   How have these values, beliefs and attitudes influenced my behavior in the workplace?
   Which of these still hold true given the new workplace?

7. Ask if there is any further discussion before moving on to the next exercise.

CAREER MANAGEMENT SERIES: New Workplace, New Worker

Exercise - My Own Beliefs and Values About Work

What values, beliefs and attitudes about work were emphasized in my youth?

How have these values, beliefs and attitudes influenced my behaviour in the workplace?

Which of these still hold true given the new workplace?

Onion Rings

Our values often influence the activities we choose to participate in. If you value creativity, for example, you might enroll in an art school, learn various crafts or become a film-maker. Alternatively, our activities can affect the values we hold.

For example, Anita is approached by her friend Bob to enroll in a dance class. Rolling her eyes, Anita can not fathom why Bob has asked her to join him in taking this class. "He knows I don't like dancing." But, she sees that Bob is quite serious and that he is sincere in his request. She agrees to take the class for his sake, but thinks that it will be a complete waste of time.

Anita does not like or value artistic pursuits and feels that she is not good at expressing herself in an artistic manner. In fact, she hasn't taken an art class or done any crafts in the past 10 years. However, after a few classes, Anita's attitude has changed and her confidence has been boosted. The dance instructor has complimented her style and says that with each class Anita is becoming more creative. This new found confidence has developed Anita's creativity skills and she is now able to bring these abilities to other activities in her life. Anita now values creativity and can see how she can take this skill and develop it in her volunteer and paid work. In Anita's case, trying something new has helped her expand her values.

The activity below, is a recipe for making value coated onion rings. It is one way to examine how your values, beliefs, skills and activities are interconnected. In the diagram below, there is a sequence of five circles looping around each other -- thus resembling the cross-section of an onion. Each ring of the onion symbolizes the layers of connections between our activities and our values.

Take three slices (diagrams) of onion provided below and prepare using the following steps:

Step One:

Take one of the "onions" below and think of a value you hold -- something that you care about. Then, work towards the outer rim by thinking of the beliefs, interests, skills and activities you have or do that are associated with this value.

Ring One:

- What beliefs do you have that are related to your values?

Ring Two:

- Which of your interests are connected to this value?

Ring Three:

- Can you identify skills that you have that are related to your values?

Ring Four:

- What activities do you participate in that are an extension of what you value?

Step Two:

Think of an activity or experience that changed how you see things. For Anita, it was taking a dance class. Write this activity on the outer ring of the onion and build inwards by thinking of the skills, interests and beliefs you have developed based on this activity. Then, record how the activity shifted or "reframed" your value.

Step Three:

Think of a value that you have and how it is connected to a work-related activity and build outward like in step one. Or, take a work-related activity and work inward to connect it to your value.

Step Four:

Reflect on and review your onions. What do they tell you about what you value? How do your activities affect your values? Do your values have an effect on your career goals and skill development? Record any thoughts you had while making your "onion rings" in your **Portfolio Builder** or in your journal.

"If I Had a Million Dollars..."

You have probably asked yourself many times, "What would I do if I had a million dollars?" The way you answer this question can say a lot about what you value. Write down 10 things that you would do if you had a million dollars.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

After completing this list, look back over it. For each item, think about why you want it. For example, imagine that you wrote that you would buy a car with the money because you want to visit your friends more often. Then think about how your desire is a reflection of your values. In this example, the value that is associated with this purchase may have been friendship. Try to write down the value that you think is connected with each item on your list.

After you have filled in the associated values, reflect on your list. Is there anything that surprised you? What does your list say about you and your values?

Working Through Work Messages

There many sayings, maxims or mottos about work that we are told throughout our lives. Have you ever heard: "Many hands make light work" or "Too many cooks spoil the broth?" What about, "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well?" We often don't think too much about the sayings that we hear over and over. If you thought about it, however, you might realize that they may have influenced your current values and beliefs about work. It can be useful to bring these messages out in the open, think about if you agree or disagree with them and clarify if and how they are impacting you current outlook.

Read over the following list of themes. Write down any messages that you received in your childhood and youth about work from your parents, peers, teachers, siblings, books, TV, etc, related to these themes.

Men and Work	Family Life and Work
Women and Work	**Work Ethics** (Principles)
Work and Education	The Younger Worker
The Older **Worker**	**Trades** vs Professions (**Blue**-Collar vs **White**-Collar Work)
Management (The Boss)	Work **Structures** (Part-time, **Casual**, **Hourly vs Salary**)

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Examine the similarities and differences between the messages that you have written down. How have these messages affected your attitudes towards work? Have these messages influenced your choices around work and learning? Are these messages relevant in today's world of work? Which ones still 'fit' and which ones don't?

Record any thoughts you have about work messages below or in your journal.

As you look through these messages, you might feel a range of emotions. These messages can be powerful influences in our lives. For example, many women feel strongly about the message that "women's work is in the home." Thinking about how this message has affected their lives may elicit an emotional reaction. Recognizing how you react to work messages is important in your understanding of what they mean and how they effect your career development. An awareness of the work messages that you carry with you is a way to clarify that your personal values are in "sync" with who you are and who you want to be.

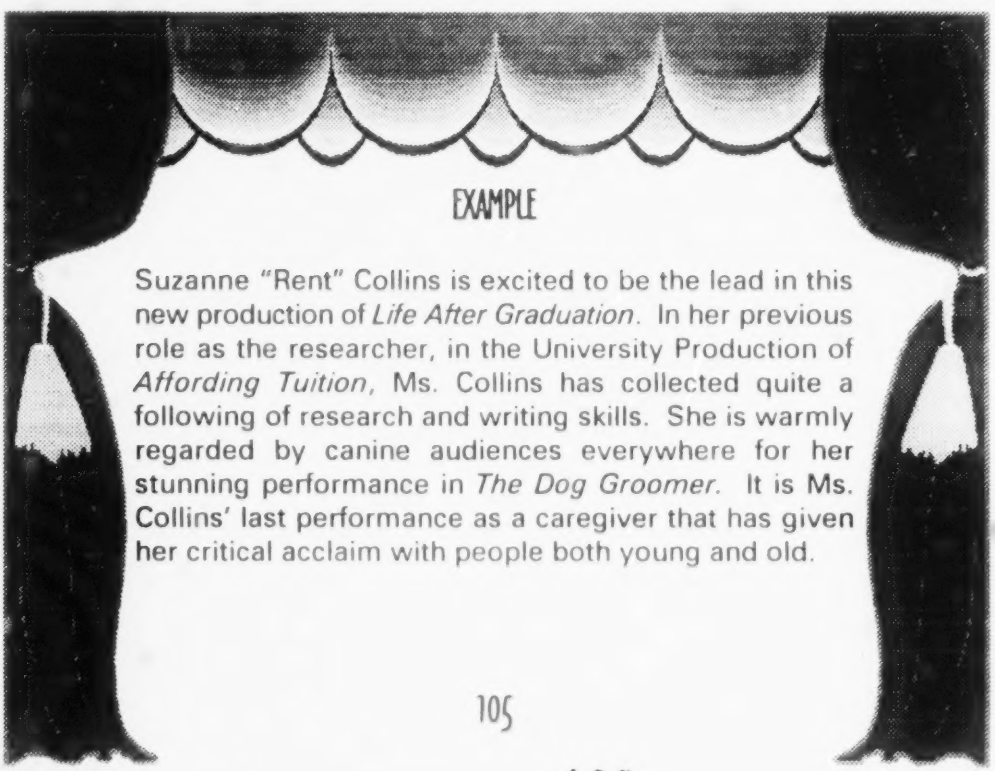
"Recently, Stared in..."

We all play many different roles in our lives. A role can be anything from a student to a parent, from a short order cook to a dog groomer.

Below, make a list of 10 roles you have had in the past and or that you hold today.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

After you have compiled a list of your past and present roles, choose five of them that you value in order to write a short biography (a paragraph in length). Write this biography as if it were to be published in a playbill (a programme) of a show on Broadway, highlighting the roles that you have recently "stared" in.



EXAMPLE

Suzanne "Rent" Collins is excited to be the lead in this new production of *Life After Graduation*. In her previous role as the researcher, in the University Production of *Affording Tuition*, Ms. Collins has collected quite a following of research and writing skills. She is warmly regarded by canine audiences everywhere for her stunning performance in *The Dog Groomer*. It is Ms. Collins' last performance as a caregiver that has given her critical acclaim with people both young and old.

My Staring Role Biography

After completing your "Staring Role" biography, think of how to adapt it to your résumé or other self-marketing work search tools:

Do you have any pieces of information as evidence of your staring roles? What could you include in your portfolio?

What skills do you use to help you in your life and work roles? Which skills are transferable (skills that can be used in a variety of tasks and jobs)? How could you provide evidence of this skill development?

Take some time to re-write your paragraph in a way that could be incorporated into a résumé, cover letter or as a piece of your Portfolio that you would use in self-marketing.

Packing Your Values Suitcase

Look back through the values section of the Expansion Zone and jot down anything that stands out for you about what you value. If you were to pack a suitcase of values that you would take with you on your career journey, what values would you include? Record in the suitcase provided below all the values you want to take with you. Of course, this is an imaginary suitcase, so you can pack as much as you want.

After, packing your suitcase, think about what your values say about who you are and where you want to be going in you career. Is there anything in the suitcase that doesn't match with your career aspirations? Remember that, just like a real suitcase, it can be repacked as often as you wish. If there is anything in your suitcase that might be inconsistent with your career goals, use your journal as a place to record your thoughts and reactions to your values and their relation to your career and life goals.

2. Dependable Strengths

Strengths Aren't Just for Super Heroes Anymore

If Superman was to list his dependable strengths, he would probably write:

- able to leap small buildings in a single bound
- faster than a speeding bullet
- fly
- able to wear tights and a cape and still look fashionable

Superman's strengths are particular (and fantastical) abilities. Yet, we all have unique and reliable strengths that we can call upon when the situation arises. These are our dependable strengths.

For many of us, acknowledging or recognizing our strengths can be difficult. Sometimes we think of strengths as something only super heroes or Olympic athletes have. It is important to be clear, however, that everyone has "dependable" strengths.

Dependable strengths are "skills, talents and other qualities that have been developed over one's lifetime, from childhood to the present, and which, when used in combination, enable us to do things well, with a sense of satisfaction and with pride" (Forester, 1989). These are skills and abilities that we carry with us and apply, often unknowingly, to many of the tasks and activities that we do throughout our lives and careers. Our dependable strengths are "transferable" skills and are linked directly to our accomplishments (tasks and activities that you feel you have done well, enjoyed doing and are proud of).

Predictable interview questions are: What strengths do you bring? or What accomplishments are you most proud of? Many people find these questions really challenging to answer. Therefore, it is important to know your strengths not only as a way of building your self awareness and confidence, but also as a method of promoting and marketing yourself throughout your career development.

The next story is about someone recognizing and revisiting their dependable strengths as a way of moving through challenges in their career.

Andy's Fifth Gear

After running Spinables™ for three years, Andy decided to move to Toronto and buy a store there. The move to Toronto did not work out as planned and Andy returned to Ottawa two years later (turn to the Taking Charge section of the Portfolio Builder to find out what happened to Andy in Toronto). While Andy was away, he left Spinables™ to be managed by one of his employees. Andy had confidence in this staff person, so had not regularly "checked up" on the store during his time away. When he moved back to Ottawa, he was unpleasantly surprised at the state of Spinables™. The quality and integrity that he had worked so hard to maintain while he ran the store had not been sustained when he moved away. The business was on the edge of folding.

Coming "home" to Spinables™ and finding it on the brink of failure was an intensely emotional experience for Andy. Because the store was so significant to his personal career vision and goals, it didn't take him a long time to decide what he wanted to do. Nor, did it take him long to put a positive "spin" on the situation. He simply said to himself, "I get to create this store and my dream all over again."

For Andy, positive thinking has helped him handle everything from job loss to career choices that didn't go as plan. Viewing situations positively gives him the perspective he needs to make decisions and fix problems.

Another way Andy develops his career is to continually set goals for himself. His goals range from increasing sales to learning about a new style of music. Seeing his goals in sight motivates him to work hard. In fact, he admits that finding a balance between his work and social life has not always been easy. He says that he has made sacrifices in his social life to help him meet his goals in building his business. But, he insists that he doesn't work hard just for the sake of working hard. Andy loves to learn and gets a lot of satisfaction out of pushing himself to achieve his goals. "I guess you could say that I am never satisfied," he says ardently. "But," he qualifies, "this is why I love doing what I do; I love a challenge."

Andy's values, beliefs and his knowledge of his own abilities have definitely influenced his goals and dreams and how he has gone about achieving them. Because Andy knows he has the abilities and skills to run his record store, he knows it is realistic to think that he can do it again. Being positive, setting and meeting goals, working hard, and confidence in his abilities make up Andy's fifth gear -- a gear of dependable strengths. This gear is a composite of work values, beliefs and skills. Like Andy, we all have a special overdrive system that can be called upon at anytime and can help us through life's challenging situations. Everyone's system is different, however. Think of your fifth gear as a foundation to help you pursue your career goals.

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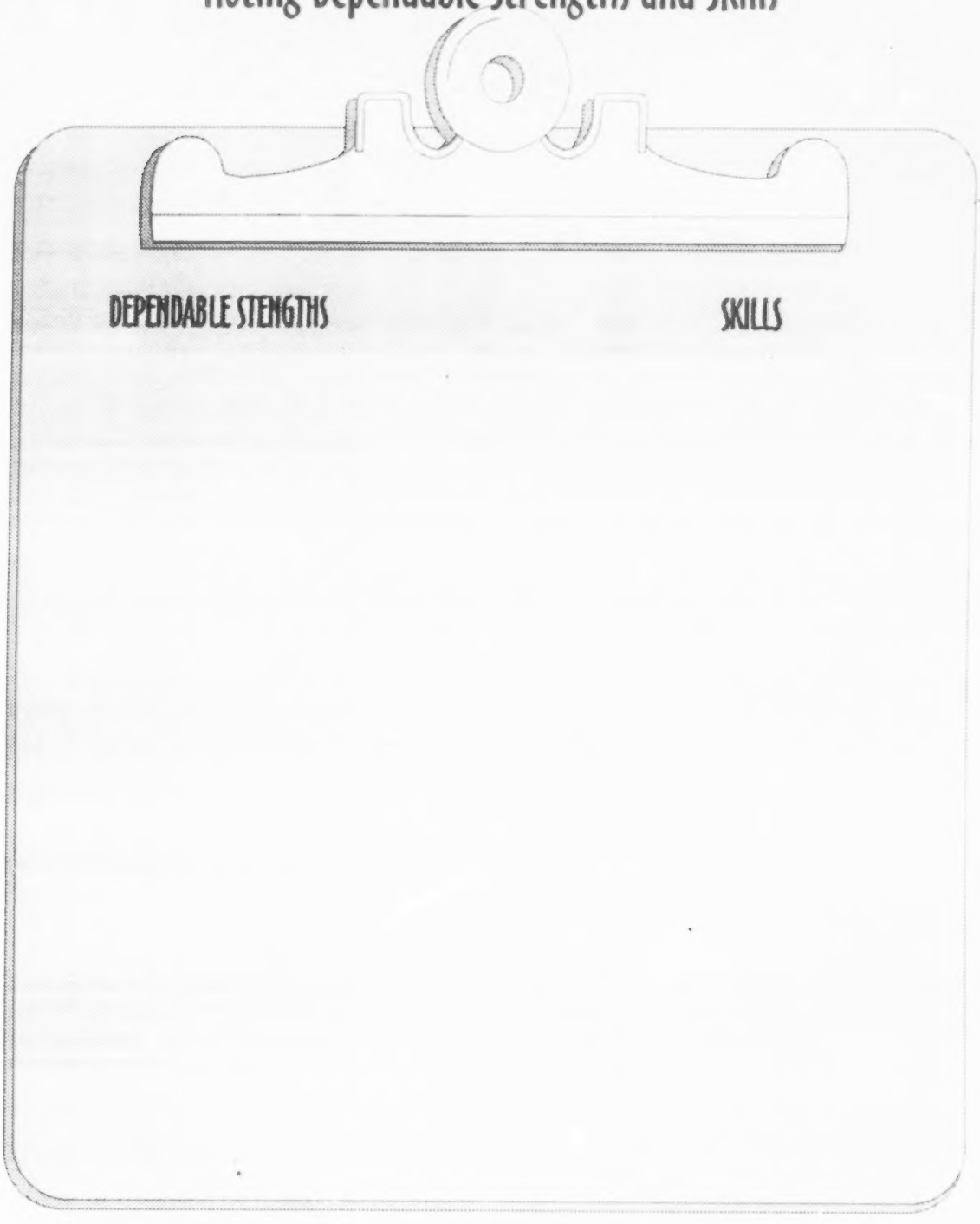
Noting Dependable Strengths and Skills



DEPENDABLE STENGTHS

SKILLS

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Everyday Success Stories

Success stories are all around us and they happen everyday. A success story doesn't have to be something that's reported on the nightly news. It can be anything such as making a fantastic meal for friends, organizing a surprise birthday party, completing a task at work or finishing an assignment at school.

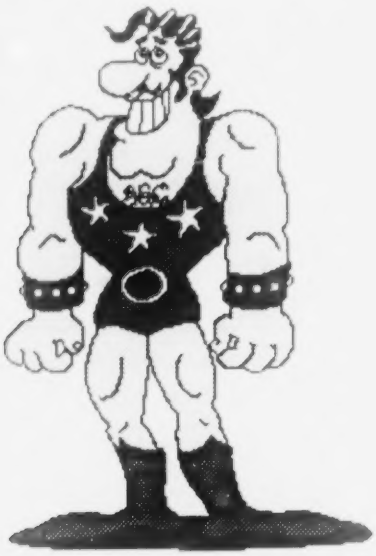
Below, list three of your accomplishments, big or small. Something that you feel you did well, enjoyed and/or are proud of. Then, list all the steps you took to complete these accomplishments. Examine each step and write down the skills that were needed to perform them.

Go back to the Employability Skills Profile handout in the Opportunities in the Labour Market section of your **Portfolio Builder**. Are there any matches between your skills and those listed on the Profile? Highlight the ones that match.

Accomplishments	Steps	Skills

Do you see any patterns? Do you use the same skills over and over? Can you think of other times when you have used these same skills?

Skills that you use over and over and call upon regularly are your *dependable strengths*. You can start a list of your *dependable strengths* below or record them in your journal. Write beside each strength a time when you used this skill to successfully complete a task or activity. Add to this list as your dependable strengths grow and refer to it in preparation for interviews, writing applications to schools or training programs, writing résumés, etc. If you have any pictures illustrating or written material outlining your successes, put them in your portfolio.



IDEA

A Skills Strengths Profile

Try a variation of the information interview by profiling dependable strengths in an occupation of your interest. Ask people in the field what are the critical strengths needed in order to succeed in this type of work? Look for connections between the skills you use in your "staring roles" and in your success stories to those listed by those you interview.

Also, check the on-line occupational profile resource, **Job Futures** (http://hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/English/index.html) for a listing of the skills used in various occupations. In each occupational profile, there is a section called, *At Work*, which details strengths and skills needed in each field. Look at the occupations that you are interested in and write down the skills that are required.

Are there any matches between your strengths and assets and the skills needed for these occupations?

3. Mapping

Going Full Circle

Imagine that you are a world renowned explorer and you've found yourself standing in the middle of nowhere. You've climbed to a mountain top and can see for miles around. From this vantage point, you begin to draw a map of the area. You begin this process by marking the spot where you are standing in relation to the four directions: North, South, East and West. Soon after exploring the area and making several maps, nowhere has now become somewhere. Now, you can choose any direction and know where you are going. That is, until you're ready to move once again into uncharted territory. At this point, you have come full circle. Now, when you find yourself in the middle of nowhere, you can always call upon your mapping skills to make it somewhere again.

You don't have to explore uncharted lands to use the process of "mapping." Mapping can be used to chart your career journey. Like any map, it is a way to visually represent your exploration inward (yourself) and outward (the labour market). Mapping is an exploration tool to help you visualize, organize and clarify your personal values, interests and skills in order to make links to career options. A map does not show you one route to go, it builds on where you have been and can highlight many roads you could take from here.

There are many ways to draw, chart or map your career journey. Several are outlined in the following BBCF Handout and Expansion Zone sections. Feel free to make as many maps as you like as often as you need.

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Mapping - Option 1

1. With paper and pencil, (you may wish to have coloured markers) sit quietly by yourself and imagine that a close friend is describing you to someone else. List 5-6 characteristics about yourself that he or she would use. (Note: Remember that this is a close personal friend who likes/loves you -- The characteristics for this activity are to be POSITIVE!).

2. Draw yourself somewhere on a blank sheet of paper (you may wish to use flip chart paper). You can represent yourself however you'd like -- it might be your name, or simply a circle with "me" written in the centre. Choose anyone of your 5-6 characteristics -- Start with whichever one stands out to you the most. Draw the characteristic on the paper in whatever way makes sense to you. Connect it to the visual representation of yourself in whatever way fits. Continue drawing your characteristics.

3. As a final step, draw examples of how you would demonstrate each characteristic. For example, you might have chosen "athletic" to describe yourself. To elaborate on that aspect of yourself, you could add such descriptions as: "love being outside," "enjoy competition," "like to work with children through sports" "volunteered at summer camp", "work part-time as a coach",and so on.

Mapping - Option 2

1. With paper and a pencil (you may wish to have coloured markers) sit quietly by yourself and think back to the first time you remember being connected to the labour market or to having a sense of "career". You may recall your first "job" or it may be a much earlier memory (ex. *I remember when I was very young that I used to line my dolls up in a row, stand at my little chalk board, and pretend that I was their teacher).* Take that memory and try to represent it visually on your paper. Draw whatever stands out to you as your first connection to the world of work.

2. Continue to move forward in time, drawing any events that stand out to you as being connected to work/career. Sometimes people draw their Career/Life line like a pathway or highway, showing roads taken/not taken along the career journey. Others might draw a river, a tree, a wheel --- the possibilities are endless.

3. Make any connections between events on your Career/Life line. You may also wish to consider how events relate to your current career directions.

Taking Off in One Direction

There are several mapping options in the **BBCF** handout section. If you have not completed a map, pick one of these options and follow the steps to complete your map.

After you have finished your map, circle the area that surprised or stood out for you. Add more detail to this section such as recording the skills you used in a particular activity. What does this section say about what you value and your strengths? How do you demonstrate those values and skills now? Keep filling out this part of the map until you feel that for now you can not build any further in this direction.

Reflect upon what you have discovered about yourself by taking off in this direction of your map. Why does this section of your map stand out?
How does it connect with your career interests? Is there any possible career options that you want to know more about? Where could you find this information? Who could you ask?

4. Career/Life Project

The Butterfly's Wings

Have you ever heard of the Butterfly Effect? It's an analogy that's used to explain the scientific theory of chaos. The term was coined by meteorologist, Edward Lorenz who wondered why it was so difficult to predict long range weather forecasts. After much research and a serendipitous moment (something that happened by chance), he discovered that the beginnings of weather systems, like other chaotic systems, are extremely sensitive to the smallest occurrences. He called this the Butterfly Effect because even something as small as a butterfly flapping its wings in China could result unpredictably in a storm off the shores of New York or produce rain in the Sahara. Chaos comes from the fact that no one can predict with any certainty what the butterfly's wings will bring. Pinpointing where the storm originates is difficult. As it gains momentum, however, its impact builds and it becomes easier to follow.

Rapid changes in the labour market can seem chaotic. Career planning can be difficult in an age when the labour market experts are telling us that half the jobs for today's high school students have not been created yet. How, then, are we to focus on our career journey when occupations and jobs are changing so radically? This is where the Butterfly Effect comes in.

Scientists needed a theory of chaos to help them explain the unstable and the unpredictable. To find opportunity in the changing world of work, you need to know what's going on out there and what's important to you. You also need to have the flexibility to be open to changes. Today, curiosity, critical thinking and adaptability are required to "sniff the future" and keep pace with our constantly changing labour market. So, what anchors us as we journey through the swells and storms of the labour market?

Consider the following twist to an old work message:

"We have always been told that if we don't know where we're going, we'll end up somewhere else. Well, the problem with that is that if you always know where you're going, you'll never end up anywhere else!"

H.B. Gelatt, *Creative Decision Making*

In this quote, Gelatt makes the distinction between having a singular goal (eg. working in company "X" as a "Y") and having a sense of purpose and direction. A firm sense of our "mission" (ie. what we hope to achieve in our career), serves as an anchor which provides context and motivation for our career goals throughout our lives.

It is important to develop more than one way of looking at your career journey. Few of us realize that we can follow our dreams in many ways. A love of teaching can be developed in many different kinds of work from volunteer coaching to teaching English in Japan. By focusing on one route, we may be closing ourselves off to the possibilities that are passing our way. Once a sense of direction and purpose is established, career opportunities exist in knowing what's happening in the labour market, in being aware of who you are and having the flexibility of grasping what the butterfly's wings pass your way.

BBCF Handout (for use in group program)

My Career Life Project

List of Occupations

Bus Driver
Make-up Artist
Accountant
Gestural Interpreter (Sign Language)
Data Processing Analyst
Real Estate Agent
Hairdresser, Barber
Secretary
Photographer
Economist
Computer Operator
Cleaner
Beautician
Interior Layout and Planning Assistant
Organizational Development Adviser
Window Cleaner
Fire Prevention Inspector
Sales Clerk
Receptionist
Industrial Design Technician
Waiter
Data Processing Clerk
Welfare and Compensation Officer
Electrical Engineer
Butcher
Information Analyst
Decorator
Employment Counsellor
Invoicing Clerk
Electrician
Door Attendant
Taxation Clerk
Car Driving Instructor
Fashion Designer
Geologist
Filing Clerk
Doctor
Dental Hygienist
Anaesthetist
Medical Archivist
Electronic Systems Inspector
Auto Mechanic
Actuary
Researcher
Specialized Educator
Archivist
Psychologist
Computer Specialist
Sociologist
Claims Examiner
Car Salesperson
Human Resources Director
Insurance Clerk
Construction Inspector
Civil Engineering Technician
Dramatic Arts Teacher
Customs Officer
Social Worker
Group Leader
Financial Investments Analyst
Writer
Labour Market Analyst
Robotics Technician
Tutor
Immigration Officer
Nurses' Aide
Retirement Counsellor
Environment Designer
Travel Agent
Evaluator
Industrial Relations Counsellor
Artist, Painter
Nurse
Ambulance Driver
Director of a Leisure Establishment
Audio-visual Technician
Insurance Broker
Physical Education Teacher
Security Guard
Colour Counsellor
Cashier
Dental Technician
Systems Analyst
Postal Clerk
Hotel Manager
Training Course Instructor Within Firms

Source: *Career Transitions: Choices and Strategies*. Danielle Riverin-Simard. Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

BBCF Handout (for use in group program)

Audio-visual Material Technician
Tourist Information Officer
Surveying Technician
Retail Business Manger
Human Resources Clerk
Poet
Heavy Machine Operator
Primary School Teacher
Truck Driver
Officer in the Armed Forces
Missionary Doctor
Veterinary Surgeon
Singer
Editorial Writer
Comedian
Architect
Physicist
Lawyer
Notary
Tv Director
Geographer
Minister
Anthropologist
President of a Company
Scriptwriter
Carpenter
Physiotherapist
Ballerina
Naturalist
Purchaser
Taxi Cab Driver
Horticulturist
Masseur
Radiotherapy Technician
Emergency Ward Nurse
Palliative Care Nurse
Acupuncturist
Optician
Audio-prosthesis Technician
Interpreter
Police Officer
Banker
Firefighter
Sailor
Magician
Stagehand
Pump Attendant
Dentist
University Dean
Chemical Technician
Labour Relations Conciliator
Deputy
Quality Control Technician
General Director of Education
Marketing Director
Public Relations Specialist
Taxidermist
Coach
Farm Hand
Nursery School Teacher
Surgeon
Museum Director
Bookkeeper
Fine Art's Teacher
Library Technician
Homoeopath
Sculptor
Town Planner
Chaplain
Translator
High School Teacher
Ornithologist
Economist
Political Scientist
Jeweller
Inventor
Forestry Technician
Model
Speech Therapist
Hardware Sales Clerk
Camera Operator
Children's Book Illustrator
College or University Teacher
Ecologist
Wildlife Officer
Graphic Designer
Designer
Paediatrician
Surveyor
Historian
Geography Teacher
Mathematician

Source: ***Career Transitions: Choices and Strategies*** Danielle Riverin-Simard Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

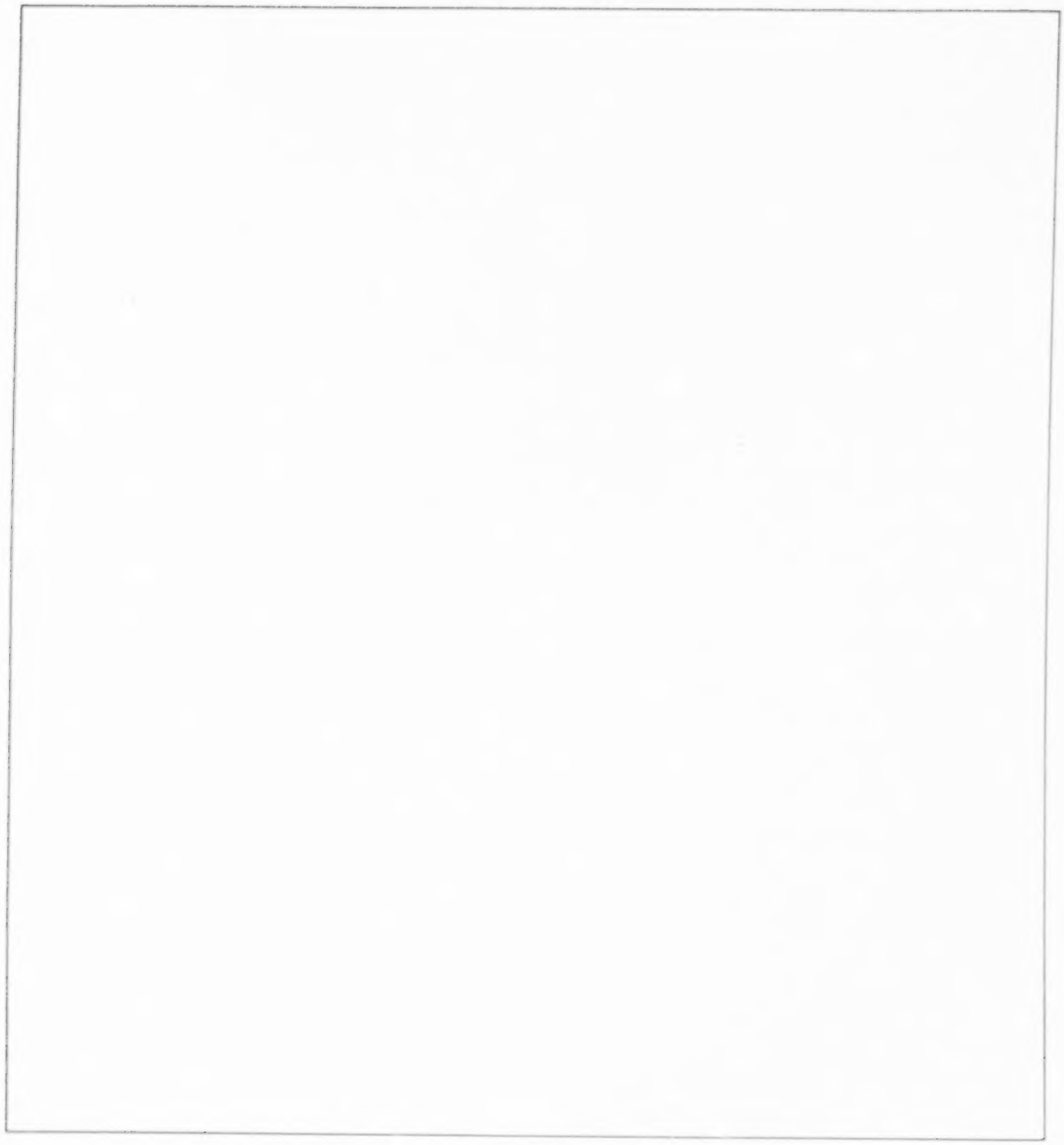
BBCF Handout (for use in group program)

Grouping of occupations

Group	Reasons

Source: *Career Transitions: Choices and Strategies* Danielle Riverin-Simard Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

My Career Life Project



Career/Life Project
Extended Exercise

An animal that describes me is....

One thing I do well is.....

If I could only keep one thing, it would be ....

If I could do anything, I would.....

Your Mission Statement

Many organizations have mission statements that tell people what it is they do -- the service(s) and product(s) they provide. The Career-Life Project in the **BBCF** handouts is one way of creating your own personal mission statement. You might want to reflect back to your career-life mission for this activity.

Start by writing a personal career-life mission statement. Record your statement below. This is a private statement that is for your eyes only.

My Personal Career-Life Mission Statement:

Look back through the **Portfolio Builder** noting anything that has stood out for you thus far. Then, think of a "public" career-life mission statement -- a sentence that you would show friends, family and potential employers about the work you want to do and where you see your career developing. It may be the same as your private statement. Or, you may want to make some changes to it. Write you public statement below.

My Career Mission Statement:

IDEA

Your Career Mission Statement is a public statement that you can use to market yourself in the world of work. One way to use this statement is on your résumé under the heading of **Career Objective**. Your **Career Objective** is often the first heading of your résumé. It is a brief sentence or phrase stating clearly the type of work you want to do (name a specialized field if appropriate). The heading of **Career Objective** is often used on targeted résumés (cases when you are applying for work from an ad or for unsolicited jobs in your field of interest).

Rewrite your career mission statement to reflect a career objective. Be as specific as possible without being so precise that you limit your options. You want to be able to explore various aspects of your field.

EXAMPLE

George is applying for the position of an operations manager. He also is interested in being a buyer. His **Career Objective** could be:

To obtain challenging work in the field of operations management with a focus on purchasing and quality control while having an opportunity to grow with the organization.

Take time to write your career objective. Remember this statement is not carved in stone. It can be changed and rewritten as often as needed. It is a targeted sentence which means that it should be appropriate to the job or field that you are applying for.

My Career Objective:

If you would like to find out more about résumé writing and résumé headings, turn to Appendix A in your **Portfolio Builder**.

Opportunities for Me Checklist

✓ Check the statements that apply to you.

- ❑ I can identify values that are important to me and my career.
- ❑ I have considered how messages have influenced my beliefs and values related to work.
- ❑ I know how my values influence my activities and vice versa.
- ❑ I have created a list of my dependable strengths.
- ❑ I can use mapping in my career exploration.
- ❑ I have a personal and career mission statement and a career objective statement.

Skills Alert

The activities in the Expansion Zone of Opportunities for Me have been intended to help you develop:

- writing skills
- self-assessment skills
- organizational skills
- creative thinking skills
- self-marketing skills
- self-awareness
- summarizing skills
- analytical skills

Write down one way that you've used each of the above skills through the exercises in the Portfolio Builder.

Taking Charge

Introduction

- Choosing Your Canteloupes
- Wise Decision Making
- Andy's Decision To Go To Toronto
- 'Just the Facts, Mam.' 'Just the Facts.'
- A Decision Making Repertoire

BBCF Handouts

- The Funnel: A Career Development Organizer
- Traditional Decision Making Model
- Consequence Matrix
- Critical Questions
- Goal Test
- My Plan For Now Is . . . My Initial Steps Are . .

Expansion Zone

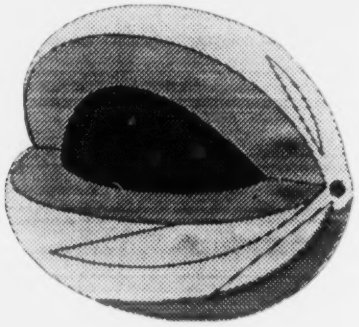
- Some Habits Are Meant To Be Built On, Not Broken
- Creative Outlet
- 'Future-Journalling'
- Recipe for 'Jus de You'
- 'Lucky Chances' — The Science Of Decision-Making
- Putting Your Decision In Writing
- Creating Sign Posts On The Road To Your Career Goal
- Going To Plan B (Contingency Planning)

Introduction

Choosing Your Cantaloupes

The next time that you're shopping in a grocery store or vegetable market, try casually watching how people choose their cantaloupes. Some sniff them in search of a fresh fragrant smell while others tap the melon in hopes of hearing that special "thump". Some press on the stem end to test for firmness while others just go by looks. If you stopped and asked each person why they choose their cantaloupes in this fashion, they would probably come up with various reasons and assure you that their method was the best way to get the best tasting fruit. But, how can all these different ways of choosing cantaloupes all yield the best choice?

Peoples' method of making decisions can be varied and still produce positive results. Why? Because there is no one "correct" method of deciding. The Taking Charge section of the **Portfolio Builder** examines the process of decision-making. In this section, you can "try on" different decision-making methods as a way of exploring your career options and moving to action. The activities in Taking Charge will help you consolidate the information that you have discovered about the world of work and your own preferences. It will help you recognize how you make decisions (how you choose your cantaloupes) and illustrate alternative ways to build on your decision-making styles (using both the thump and sniff methods). The focus of the Taking Charge section is to help you develop a "fruitful" career goal and plan the next steps of your career journey.



Wise Decision Making

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out."
-- Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962

In hindsight, it seems almost ridiculous that any record company would make such a decision about one of the most popular bands in history. The decision not to sign the Beatles to a recording contract did not come from a small and inexperienced company, but from powerful music producers who had many years of experience and expertise in the field. Decca was a major force in the American entertainment scene between 1934-1973. It mainly produced and recorded country music albums, but it also signed artists such as Buddy Holly, Tom Jones and jazz great, Ella Fitzgerald. It seems impossible that a record company of this stature could have made the decision they did.

It's difficult to know exactly why Decca's executives decided not to record the Beatles, but there were probably many factors that they considered. Maybe, their market research told them that guitar music wasn't trendy. Maybe, Decca was going to an all country format. Perhaps, they just felt that the Beatles would not be popular. Or, it is possible, that the Beatles' sound was too "new" and Decca wasn't willing to take the risk of recording them. Or maybe, they simply couldn't groove to their music. Decca's decision could have been based on one, all or none of these factors. They obviously felt confident in their decision. But, was this a colossally bad decision on the part of Decca's executives?

First of all, imagine how difficult it would be to make decisions if you thought that the result could become notorious for being one of the biggest missed chances in history. If this was the case, you would probably develop "Decision Paralysis" -- not able to make a choice either way. But, what if you took a different approach to decision making and thought of it not as a means to an end, but as an opportunity to learn and make discoveries? Would it be easier to make choices? What if you saw life and career decisions not as one static event, but as a lifelong process where you decide for now and know that changing your mind is always possible.
Consider the possibility that Decca may have learned more about popular music and its audience by not signing the Beatles. Of course, they would have been content to have recorded a few of their best selling albums. However, it is not just a coincidence that Decca signed the Rolling Stones a year later and continued to produce the Stones albums until 1976. Clearly, guitar music wasn't on its way out.

In this light, the infamous Beatles decision was certainly a learning experience from which Decca was ultimately able to prosper. Wise decision making is not about getting it right all the time and it's definitely not a one shot deal. Decision-making is about learning, exploration and development.

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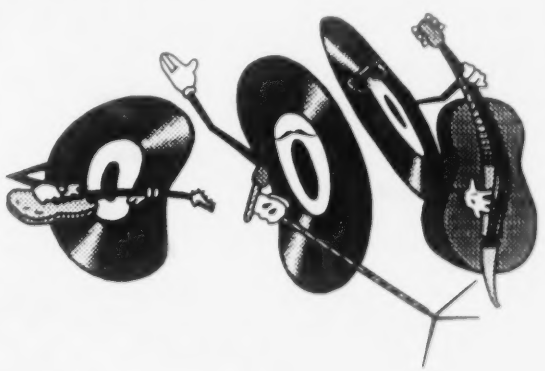
For many of us, decision making is not easy. Depending on the range of choices, the weight of a decision can be frightening. Why is decision making difficult?

- In deciding, we give up at least one other possibility.
- The outcome, regardless of how well it is planned, is not completely predictable.
- Decisions involve risk.
- There is no single, tried and true method of making decisions.
- Sometimes we don't have enough information; sometimes it feels like we have too much!

The Taking Charge section of the **Portfolio Builder** takes a fresh look at the process of decision making and career planning. The career development model, in which the **Portfolio Builder** is based, sees decision making as:

- focusing on discovery. Decision making is as much a process for acquiring career goals as it is for achieving them;
- being about learning to plan and planning to learn;[1]
- a process that believes that there are several ways to make a decision. There are no bad or good ways to decide;
- a lifelong process that emphasizes deciding for the moment. Decisions are not a one shot deal;
- embracing uncertainty and being able to choose, knowing that the results are unpredictable.

Wise decision making is about deciding with confidence, embracing uncertainty, learning from the outcomes and creating a plan of next steps. Making decisions and plans about your career future should be a natural process, not something that is forced. From decisions, learning will emerge. From learning, decisions will follow.



[1]See H B Gelatt, *Creative Decision Making: Using Positive Uncertainty* (California Crisp Publications Inc., 1991)

Andy's Decision to go to Toronto

After running Spinables™ for three years, Andy decided that he wanted to do something new. At the time, his girlfriend was moving to Toronto. He felt that this was a sign that it was the "right" time to move. Upon reflection, Andy says that his move to Toronto was based on thinking with his heart. "I must have been," he adds, "since I was willing to leave the store for this relationship."

Andy moved to Toronto later that year. He bought another used record store in hopes of repeating the same success that he had in Ottawa. He says he purchased the store on a whim with minimal research. In hindsight, he shakes his head and says he can't believe he wasn't more careful when he bought the store. Upon taking ownership, he discovered some financial inconsistencies and other problems that he would have checked into if his decision to buy the business wasn't based solely on an impulse .

After overcoming the Toronto store's problems, Andy says that he still didn't feel right. The whole situation of moving to Toronto, the second time, never sat well. He persevered with running the business, but after two years he sold it and moved back to Ottawa to run Spinables™ once again.

When asked whether he'd rather forget the decision to move to Toronto, he replies that life is a series of learning experiences. Throughout his career, Andy's successful decisions have combined instinct, reflection and research. This may sound a bit paradoxical, but he says *carpe diem* (seize the day) is easier when you have a clear vision, when you've "done your homework" and when you have confidence that it can happen. He says the Toronto move didn't feel right because he didn't think it through. Now, he realizes how he makes his best decisions and, for him, it's a formula he can rely on. He completely trusts his decision making abilities. He has to because the used music business is based on making important decisions everyday.

Andy's story is an illustration of the paradox in decision making. Making choices can be full of paradox because uncertainty usually accompanies any decision. But, uncertainty can be an ally to your decision making process. Andy's uncertainty about his decision to buy the store in Toronto proved to be an asset.

Educator and writer, H.B Gelatt suggests four paradoxical principles to guide decision making. They are:

- be focused and flexible about what you want (know what you want, but be ready to change);

- be aware and wary about what you know (seek information and question what you think you know);
- be objective and optimistic about what you believe (treat your facts with imagination, but don't imagine your facts);
- be practical and magical about what you do (balance your head and your heart)[2]

Andy uses uncertainty to check impulsive decision. Andy knows that he decides best when he uses his awareness of the industry coupled with his optimism about his abilities to guide his "quick thinking" choices.

Think back to the last 3 big decisions you have made. Have you used any of the paradoxical principles in your past decisions? Has uncertainty ever helped you decide?

[2]See H B. Gelatt, *Creative Decision Making: Using Positive Uncertainty* (California: Crisp Publications, 1991)

"Just the Facts, Mam'. Just the Facts."

In old detective movies, there was always a woman who would walk into the private investigator's office wearing high heels, a well-tailored suit, white gloves and a wide brimmed hat that would slightly cover one eye. She would be crying when she walked into the P.I.s office. And true to formula, she would sit down, dab her eyes with a neatly pressed handkerchief and begin telling her tale of love, heartbreak, murder and mystery.

But, before she can provide any description to her story, the P.I. interrupts and says, "Just the facts, Mam.' Just the facts." Emotional descriptions, context, passion don't matter to the investigation. He (it pretty well always is a he in the 1950s mystery movies) believes that only the hard, cold facts will lead to solving the mystery. The investigator has a case of the SFDM: straight forward decision making.

There is nothing wrong with those of us who prefer to have just the facts and who value straight forward decision making. On the other hand, there is nothing wrong with those of us who trust our instincts or who let our emotions speak volumes and decide from the heart. Exploring different ways of investigating might have been helpful and might have enabled P.I.s to solve their cases more quickly. Then again, that might not have made for good movie-making.

When you explore and investigate your career options, it's a good idea to use both logical and creative decision-making strategies. It helps to generate various options and consider an assortment of consequences. So, don't be wary of the colourful tale and, at the same time, make sure you know the facts.

A Decision Making Repertoire

Most of us have decision making preferences and habits. Depending on the situation and the choice to be made, some people can decide based on a gut feeling while, in another situation, they seek out the only *logical* option. Decision making can be complex or straight forward depending on the individual, the situation and the importance of the decision.

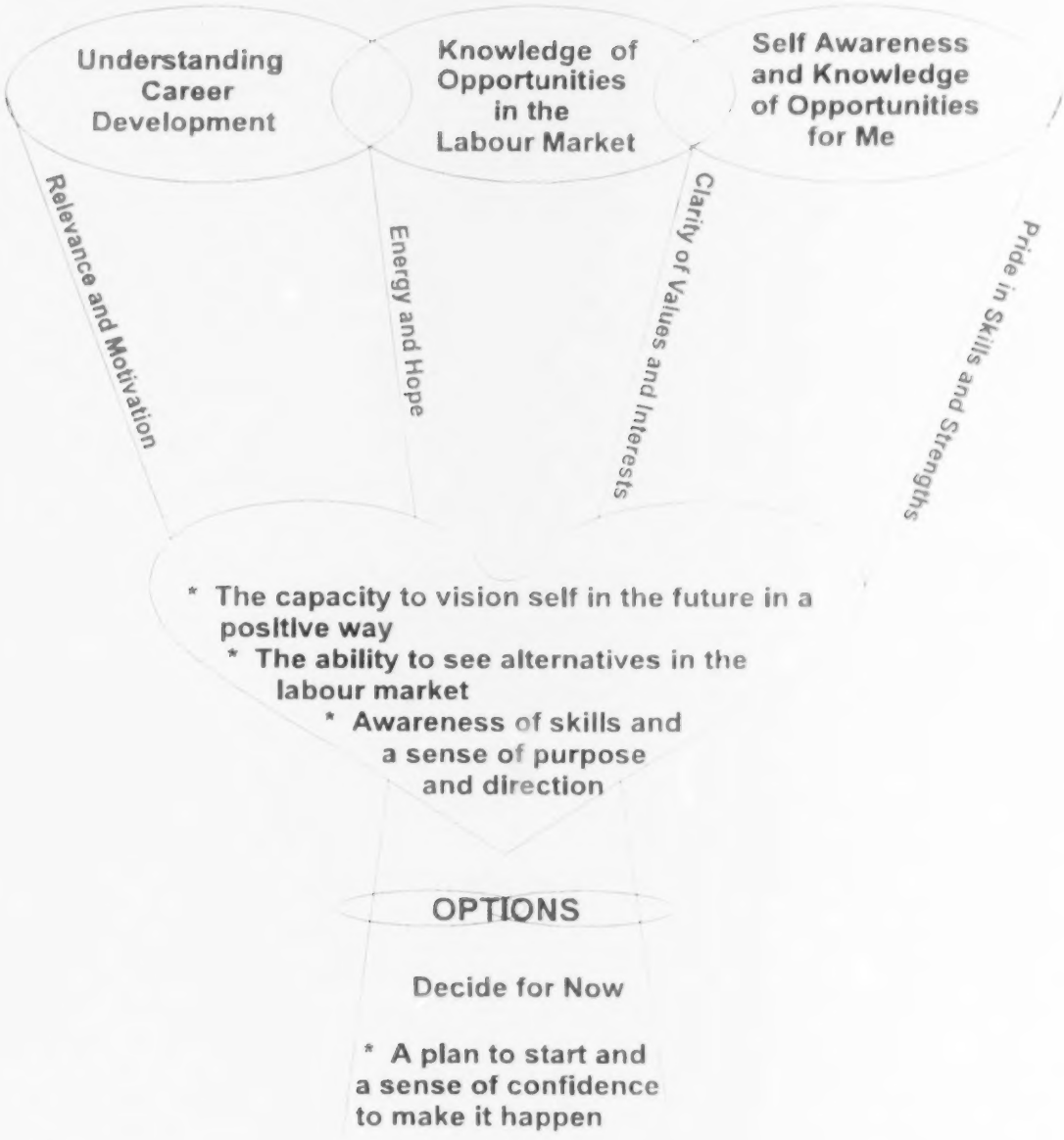
Sometimes, we find ourselves in a situation where we feel overwhelmed by the decision to be made. In these cases, we often seek a different viewpoint by asking a close friend what they would do in a similar circumstance. Another way to gain perspective is to have a decision making "repertoire". For example, if you generally use a logical and linear process to decide, take a walk on the wild side and imagine what the consequence would be if you made the decision impulsively (leaping before you looked) or intuitively (with what feels right). By looking at different ways to decide, you may generate consequences you hadn't thought of or see new options that you hadn't thought of originally.

Developing a decision making repertoire means combining both "traditional" models of decision making with creative and intuitive approaches. In the Expansion Zone, the stages of a "traditional" decision-making model is used as a base to work from. These stages are:

1. Decide to decide;
2. Research what's out there and confirm your options;
3. Gather and consolidate information about self;
4. Generate consequences;
5. Decide.

Added to these steps are a variety of strategies and ideas. The intent is that, by combining diverse methods, you will be able to develop a decision-making repertoire.

Decision making is a vital part of the career development process. Each decision builds upon the previous one and so on and so on. Decision making is as much about discovery as it is about planning. While building a decision making repertoire is not always easy, it is important to realize there is more than one way to make decisions. Trying on different decision making styles can sometimes yield interesting outcomes. Having a repertoire of approaches, can help bring together all the information that you've gathered about the world of work, you and your vision for the future.


Understanding Career Development
Knowledge of Opportunities in the Labour Market
Self Awareness and Knowledge of Opportunities for Me
Relevance and Motivation
Energy and Hope
Clarity of Values and Interests
Pride in Skills and Strengths
* The capacity to vision self in the future in a positive way
* The ability to see alternatives in the labour market
* Awareness of skills and a sense of purpose and direction
OPTIONS
Decide for Now
* A plan to start and a sense of confidence to make it happen

STEP 1
Decide to Decide
STEP 2
Research what's out there and confirm your options
STEP 3
Gather and consolidate information about self
STEP 4
Generate Consequences
STEP 5
Decide
(for Now)

QUESTIONNAIRE: ARE YOU READY FOR THE PARADOXICAL PRINCIPLES?

Answer yes or no to the following questions.

__ 1. Have you ever wanted something, gotten it, and found out you wanted something else?

__ 2. Have you ever set a clear goal or a precise objective and discovered a better one along the way?

__ 3. Have you ever experienced serendipity?

__ 4. Do you sometimes engage in fuzzy thinking?

__ 5. Have you ever found it an advantage *not* to know something?

__ 6. Are you sometimes afraid to get a second opinion?

__ 7. Are you more familiar with the past than the future?

__ 8. Have you ever experienced misinformation?

__ 9. Have you ever distorted the truth?

__ 10. Do you sometimes feel unacquainted with reality?

__ 11. Have you ever found wishful-thinking to be an advantage?

__ 12. Have you ever experienced a "self-fulfilling prophecy?"

__ 13. Have you ever made an important decision in a way that wasn't totally rational?

__ 14. Have you ever decided not to decide?

__ 15. Do you find it is easier to be the result of the past than the cause of the future?

__ 16. Have you ever experienced clairvoyance?

6 Thinking Hats

- Yellow Hat:
  hat of optimism
  What are the logical positive benefits?

- Black Hat:
  hat of caution
  What are the potential difficulties?

- Green Hat:
  hat of creativity
  What are possible new solutions and ideas?

- White Hat:
  hat of logic and reason
  What information is needed/available?

- Red Hat:
  hat of intuition and feelings
  What is your immediate "gut reaction"

- Blue Hat:
  hat of process control
  As you review all of the preceeding hats, what outcome results from the full process? What decision emerges?

6 Thinking Hats Activity

- Choose an issue and "take a side"
- Follow the order of the hats
- Wear each hat for 2 minutes (except the red hat - 30 seconds)
- Appoint a time keeper
- Think expansively and creatively

Consolidation Map

Consequence Matrix

	Short Term	Long Term
Self		
Others		

Critical Questions

1. What decision have made (at least for now)?

2. What information supports your decision-out there? in-here?

3. What factors have you considered? Where does your decision fit with your big picture? Is it congruent and supported by who you are and what is important to you?

4. What are the personal consequences of your decision? How will it impact others?

5. What is your practical self saying (left brain)? What is your magical self saying (right brain)?

6. What is your goal and first steps - be specific.

Goal Test

Is your goal:

- *conceivable?* — Can it be put into words that are understandable to others?
- *believable?* — Does the goal-setter believe in the goal?
- *achievable?* — Can it be accomplished?
- *desirable?* — Does the goal-setter want and value the goal?
- *measurable?* — Is it time bound with clear outcomes and dates for achievements?

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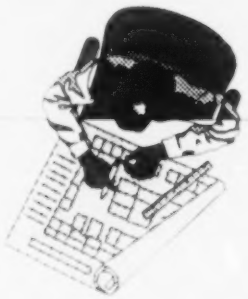
My Plan for Now is...



PLAN B

My Initial Steps Are...

Target-date to complete

1.

2.

3.

The Expansion Zone

Some Habits are Meant to be Built on, not Broken!!

Generally speaking, their isn't one "correct" method of deciding. People use various way to decide which vary from being impulsive to being rational. However, many of us tend to stick with a primary method for deciding. To check out the various ways that people use to decide, take a survey of your network. Ask those around you how they decide? Do they use one approach or many? Does their decision-making style depend on the decision to be made or do they have a no-fail system for making choices? Is there one method used the most? What way is used the least?

Your Habit

You might have gotten into the habit of relying on one method of deciding. It can be very helpful to know how you typically decide. Think back to past decisions you've made. If you had to label the method that you used, would it be:

- Rational -- "The most sensible and logical choice;"
- Impulsive -- "Leap before you look;"
- Delaying -- "Cross that bridge later;"
- Intuitive -- "This fells right, not sure why;"
- Safe -- "Easy does it;"
- Pleasing -- "Do what others expect;"
- Fatalistic -- "It's in the cards;" or
- some other method?

Think back to the last significant decision you made. Consider how you made that decision. Pick a method of deciding that you normally would **not** use and write in your journal how using this different method would have affected your decision. What would the outcome have been? Do you think you would have discovered any alternatives or new ideas by using this method?

Creative Outlet -- Put Your Thinking Caps On!

Change is sometimes easier said than done. It might be one thing to talk about building your decision making repertoire, but quite another thing to actually do it. One way to gain another perspective and try on different ways of deciding is to think in terms of trying on different hats. Edward DeBono, an authority on thinking and creativity, developed a method for expanding your decision-making repertoire called the "Six Thinking Hats". You may have heard the expression, "Put your thinking cap on." Well, DeBono has created a thinking process that uses six caps instead of one. Each thinking cap is labelled by colour with each colour representing a different perspective on the decision. For example,

The Yellow Hat looks at why a decision *will* work. It is the hat that rationally explores the upside of the situation.
"I would succeed in nursing because I excelled in science and I value helping people in need."

The Black Hat is the hat of caution. It is a valuable hat as it points out the negative consequences of a decision.
"I'll be working in a Health Care system that is undergoing major downsizing and funding cuts."

The Green Hat is the hat of creativity. With this hat on, you brainstorm possible alternatives and creative solutions.
"I could apply my nursing skills to other sectors (ex. research, community-based, international development)."

The White Hat is the information gathering hat. It points out where information is needed or where there are information gaps.
"I'm not quite sure about which nursing program is best for me because I haven't checked out my options."

The Red Hat is your emotional response -- your gut reaction.
"I can't explain, but I feel that going into nursing is the right thing to do at this point in my life."

The Blue Hat provides the bird's eye view. You put it on after you have put on all other hats. With the blue hat on, you look at the whole process and consider what stood out or what still needs to be resolved before you can make a decision.
"I have a clearer idea of what my decision will be, but I still need more information about program options before making my choice."

Take one decision related to the next step in your career development. What is an career option (or goal) that you are currently considering? It can be anything from deciding whether to go back to school to taking a part-time job. Using that goal, try on each hat in order and write down all the ideas that you can generate from each perspective.

Has this process added anything to your decision-making? What do you need in order to move to a decision?

The Yellow Hat

The Black Hat

The Green Hat

The White Hat

The Red Hat

The Blue Hat

"Future-Journaling"

Write on the top of a blank piece of paper or in your journal the date one year from today. Imagine what you're journal entry would be for this date. Consider that you are about to go to bed and your writing the day's events down. Take your time and be as detailed as possible in your description. The following questions may help you fill out your entry:

What did you do on this day?;
Where are you?;
How do you feel about where you are and what you are doing?
What are you happy about? Is there anything bothering you?

After you have completed your entry, take some time to reflect on it. Were you surprised by anything? In your writing the day's events, did a career goal emerge? Is this something that you are thinking about currently? Did your entry describe where you imagine yourself being or wanting to be?

We can sometimes learn a lot about our future if we trust ourselves and imagine it. Visualizing provides a safe and powerful way to explore our future. It is also a way to begin creating our career future. How we believe the future will be is, they say, the best predictor of how it *will* be. Try "Future-Journaling" any time you want to "try on" your career options.

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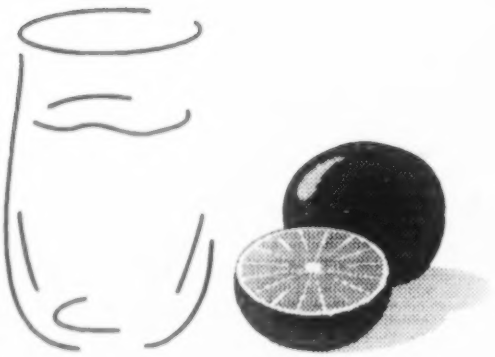
A Recipe for Jus de You



In cooking, the art of reduction is fundamental in making any sauce (or as the fine chefs say, any "jus"). The importance of this cooking technique is to reduce the amount of sauce without losing any of the flavour. In fact, by boiling down their sauces, excellent chefs actually increase the flavour when they reduce it.

The activities in the Taking Charge section focus on taking what you know about the labour market and what you have discovered about your values, beliefs, interests and skills and "boiling" that information down into a clear vision (and goal) for your career future. By narrowing your career options, you aren't losing anything. Rather, you're channelling all your knowledge into a concise career goal and action plan

Look back to the Opportunities for Me Expansion Zone activity, "Taking Off in One Direction". Look at how you filled out one section of your map. Review why this section of your map appealed to you. Is there a potential career goal that you would like to carry forward? Look at your map and think of a word or phrase that would capture its essence. This, you might say, is the "jus de you."

Generating Consequence and Taking Chances — The Science of Decision-Making

Think of some words that characterize the field of science. Do the words: rational, logical, and orderliness come to mind? Scientific method, the process of experimentation, is noted as a way to ensure control and exact results in research. But, what about the value of chance and serendipity (making good and unexpected discoveries by accident) in science. If you were to examine the history of science, you would find that chance discoveries have led to new ideas that have eventually led to significant research and advances in the field.

Most scientists today would say that there is value in both logic and imagination. Louis Pasteur, the scientist who discovered the method for pasteurizing milk, wrote that "In the field of observation, chance favours only the prepared mind." Today, scientist believe that you create "lucky accidents" by considering many possible outcomes to experiments and always keeping an eye-open for changes and chance.

There has been an attempt to marry two decision-making processes in the Taking Charge section of the **Portfolio Builder**. The "traditional" model is a step by step rational method for making career decisions while the "creative" model embraces uncertainty and emphasizes flexibility. Together, they provide a logical and imaginative way to think through your career options. They also help prepare you for "lucky accidents."

Generating consequences is important to both methods of decision-making. In **BBCF**, you are introduced to two consequence generating models (The Consequence Matrix and the Whole-Brained Approach [see the handout section]). These models are used to clarify and consolidate your career goals and action plans. They are also useful in revealing options you may not have thought of or a positive twist to your career goal.

Besides the two models outlined in the handouts, can you think of other ways to imagine or think about the consequences of a decision?

IDEA #1

Ask your network how they would approach your career goal? Ask them what consequences and outcomes they could see emerging from your decision?

IDEA #2

A typical way to approach making a decision is to weigh the positive outcomes against the negative ones. Take a career goal that you are considering and think of the negative and positive outcomes. After you have done this, can you think of a strategy or a way to take the negative consequences and turn them into positive outcomes? Or, can you think of ways to deal with adverse outcomes that could help you move your career goal forward?

Putting Your Decision in Writing

Think about the career goal assessments that you have done so far. Is there one goal that seems to fit with your future vision? Before deciding to put your goal into action, take some time to put the goal in writing. Use the following questions as a guide for Journaling about your future goal:

1. What decision have you made, at least for now?

2. What information supports your decision (outward and inward)?

3. What factors have you considered? Where does your decision fit with your big picture? Is it congruent and supported by who you are and what is important to you?

4. What are the personal consequence of your decision? How will it impact others?

5. What is your practical, rational self saying (left brain)? What is your magical, creative, impulsive self saying (right brain)?

Take some time to clearly define and state your goal. Think about how you would bring together your rational and creative perspectives to your career objective. Remember that writing down your decision does not mean that your career goal is carved in stone. You have made a choice that seems to make sense for now and a decision that you feel you can commit your energies to, for now.

Creating Sign Posts on the Road to Your Career Goal

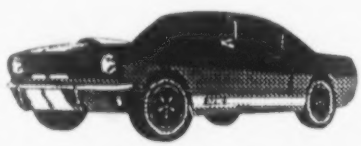
At this moment, your goal may seem to be in a far off land -- a place that will take time and resources to travel to. Sometimes this goal can seem so far away that we can feel overwhelmed by the idea of trying to get there. Because of this far and away feeling, it is important to draw clear steps towards this goal.

On road trips, children often ask their parents, "Are we there yet? And, parents usually reply, "Almost," hoping to appease their children. In many cases, however, this reply does not satisfy their young passengers. What if parents gave their children a map of the route and showed clear sign posts to look for during the trip. Children could then see how far they had gone, how much further it was to the next sign post and always know the answer to their question, "Are we there yet?"

Goal testing and action planning is like drawing sign posts on a map of your career journey. One way to begin testing your career goal is to ask yourself if it is:

- conceivable? -- Can it be put into words that are understandable?
- believable? -- Do you believe in the goal?
- achievable? -- Can it be accomplished?
- desirable? -- Do you want and value the goal?
- measurable? -- What is your time frame for achieving the goal? What are the outcomes? What are the dates for achievements?

Example



Dana's career goal is to start a car detailing business (remember the **Portfolio Builder**'s introductory example). She has always loved antique cars and has helped her father rebuild many of them. After putting her career objective through a goal test, she knows that she can clearly state the goal, she believes in it, she wants it and feels that she has the background to achieve it. However, when she explores its measurability, she realizes that she has not drawn up a time line to achieve her goal. She is now aware that she needs some sign-posts to indicate if she is on track.

After exploring how to make her goal more measurable, she realizes that she needs to work at a professional detailing shop as an apprentice. She also recognizes that she needs to learn about operating a small business. Her revised goal is:

- to get a part-time position at a professional car detailing business while studying Business part-time at a community college in order to start my own business within the next three years.

From this revised goal, Dana is now able to prioritize her career plan and clearly outline the action steps required for achievement.

Take a look at your goal statement that you wrote in Putting Your Decision in Writing and put it through a goal test. Do you need further information in order to pursue this goal? Do you need to revised your goal in any way? What will you do in the next few weeks and months to achieve your goal? Do you have a time line? What are your milestones or recognizable sign-posts on your journey? What are your next steps for putting your goal into action?

Going to Plan B (Contingency Planning)

Taking your first steps toward your career goal can feel like there is no turning back. Hitting a roadblock along the way can be devastating because there is this feeling of no return. But, a barrier in career plans does not have to be a unscalable wall. Usually, barriers can be over come and (perhaps with a few adaptions) the goal can still be pursued. This is where contingency planning comes in as a way to move beyond and deal with barriers.

back through the segments of Andy's story in your **Portfolio Builder** and write down each barrier that Andy faced while attaining his career goal. Think about the external barriers (ie. factors that were beyond his control) and the internal barriers (ie. factors that were within Andy's control). After creating a list of the external and internal barriers that Andy has faced. Write down five ways that Andy has or could have planned contingencies for the roadblocks on his career journey.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Think about your own career goal. Think about the external and internal barriers that could arise and strategize ways that you could deal with these roadblocks. Being proactive in making contingency plans can be one of the best ways to overcome many of life's curve balls! Best laid plans include ways to handle the "what ifs."

Taking Charge Checklist

Check the statements that apply to you:

___ I can organize what I have learned about the labour market and me in order to generate career options and move to making decisions about my career goals.

___ I understand traditional and creative decision making processes.

___ I know my decision making habits and how to build on them.

___ I have begun to develop a decision-making repertoire.

___ I have made a decision about my career future and have clear plans for actioning this goal.

___ I have generated consequences for this decision and have developed contingency plans.

Skills Alert!!

The activities in the Expansion Zone of Taking Charge have been intended to help you develop:

- writing skills
- decision-making skills
- problem-solving skills
- personal management skills
- adaptability
- evaluative skills
- initiative
- goal setting skills
- action planning skills
- consolidation skills
- analytic skills

Write down one way that you've used each of the above skills through the exercises in the **Portfolio Builder**.

Congratulations!!!

By making you way through the **Portfolio Builder**, you have made an important contribution to your career development. You have built a solid foundation from which to build on and carry with you throughout your career. Because your career development is a lifelong process of learning and work, your portfolio is a work in progress. It will be updated and reorganized often as you establish new goals and develop new plans. You now have a tool to help you explore opportunities in the labour market and opportunities for you. You also have created a sound understanding of your values, beliefs, interests and skills and an awareness that they will develop as you progress throughout your career.

Your portfolio is a record and an archive of your career development to be revised as you build you skills and have new experiences. Keeping it up-to-date is an excellent way to ensure that your portfolio can help you make career transitions and grab career opportunities throughout your journey.

Happy Travelling!!

APPENDIX A

- Parts of a Functional Résumé
- Bibliography of Labour Market Authors
- Interesting Career Websites to Check Out

Parts of a Functional Résumé

1. **Personal Information**

   This section is straightforward. The purpose is to provide the employer with information that allows her or him to contact you for more information or an interview.

2. **Career Objective**

   This section's purpose is to tell the employer what type of work you are interested in. It shows the employer you have thought about where your skills and experiences would be best applied.

3. **Highlights of Qualifications**

   The purpose of this part of your résumé is to catch the attention of the employer with your outstanding skills, qualities and abilities without him or her having to search for it throughout your résumé. It puts the important information right up front and often tells the employer whether to read on or move on to another résumé. It is easier to create this section after you have filled in the rest of your résumé because it is a snapshot of the best of your qualifications. It comes at the beginning of the finished résumé because it is so important.

   Sometimes it is difficult to make a sentence about your qualities. Here are some lists of adjectives, nouns and verbs for describing your qualities. Take one word or phrase from each column that relates to your skills and create a sentence. [Ex. Dedicated worker who thrives on challenges].

List 1. Qualities in adjective form	
analytical	dedicated
flexible	ambitious
adaptable	cheerful
resilient	confident
innovative	cooperative
motivated	hard working
enthusiastic	results-oriented
ambitious	optimistic
assertive	goal-oriented
dependable	professional
sincere	confident
persistent	business-like
patient	production-oriented
intelligent	imaginative
quick learner	efficient
mature effective	experienced
creative	
responsible	

List 2. Noun descriptors	
problem-solver	planner
organizer	worker
coordinator	achiver
communicator	person
presenter	negociator
leader	decision-maker
information processor	innovator
team player	

List 3. Present tense verb forms	
thrives on	appreciates
has affinity for	interested in pursuing
respects	qualified to
loves to	experienced in
enjoys	able to
admires	

4. **Skills/Experience**

Because employers are looking for what you can do more than the diploma you hold this section is a very important part of your résumé. The idea here is to list the skills you have developed and demonstrate them to the employer.

5. **Work Experience**

This section is the place where you to tell the employer about work you have done. Different types of work will suggest different skills, qualities and abilities. If you have a formal record of jobs you have held, put it here. If your work history is very regular, list your experiences in a chronological format. If you have never had a formal position, think of projects that you have done that would be of interest to the employer. For example, if you built a garage with your father, neighbour or relative, tell the employer what you did. An employer recognizes that such work usually means commitment, work ethic, skills and qualities of dependability. If you put in the garden for your family or relatives, list it in work experience because it is work. In these cases, group projects together that have skills in common rather than using a chronological format.

6. **Education and Training**

A listing (in chronological order) of your diplomas, certificates, courses and professional development.

7. **Other Information**

In this section you can have sub-headings such as awards, languages, community service, etc.

Bibliography of Labour Market Authors

Charland, William A. Jr. *Career Shifting: Starting Over in a Changing Economy.* Holbrook, Massachusetts: Bob Adams Inc. 1993.

Career Shifting is a "consumer's guide" to learning and training in a changing economy. It is a resource and guide for those who want to evaluate their skills and take control of their career paths. Charland gives his readers concrete exercises to help them explore their career options.

Foot, David with Daniel Stoffman. *Boom, Bust and Echo: How to Profit from the Coming Demographic Shift.* Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross, 1996.

The book's purpose is to help people forecast consumer and economic trends through demographic analysis. Chapter four, "Jobs and the Corporation," is particularly useful to those exploring work opportunities since it has many recommendations about developing your career. Foot's projected forecasts of Canada's economic future makes this book a worthwhile read.

Gelatt, H.B. *Creative Decision Making: Using Positive Uncertainty.* Los Altos: California: Crisp Publications, Inc., 1991

This is an exercise workbook that guides and enables its readers to explore a "whole-brain" decision strategy. It is a vital resource for developing a positive attitude towards uncertainty in a changing world. Gelatt offers many goal setting strategies for coping with unpredictable futures.

James, Jennifer. *Thinking in the Future Tense: Leadership Skills for a New Age.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Filled with insightful stories about her own career path, Jennifer James explores how attitudes effect our career futures. She argues that we have to look at the information age with new eyes, to examine our own histories in order to examine our working relationships and to challenge ourselves to learn new skills. *Thinking in the Future Tense* has many analytic exercises that help you assess your approaches to career development.

Kaye, Marcia. "Get to work." *Canadian Living* (October 1996):51-57.

Marcia Kaye has crafted a wonderful article that gives you several key messages about the world of work in the 1990s. Concise, quick and informative.

Menzies, Heather. *Whose Brave New World? The Information Highway and the New Economy*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1996.

Whose Brave New World? is a political analysis of social and cultural restructuring of the information age. This book is extremely well written and equally well researched. It gives an excellent indication of the social implications of computerization. She argues that the current view and value placed on technology ignores human needs and conditions. Menzies believes that we need to take hold of the language and remain critical of the uses of technology.

Reid, Angus. *Shakedown: How the New Economy is Changing Our Lives*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1996.

Since the late-1970s, Reid has been polling Canadians about their politics, culture and daily lives. *Shakedown* is a composite of this research. By charting key Canadian events since the 1960s, Reid puts the new economy into historical perspective. One of his main concerns about Canada's approach to the changing economy is its willingness to dismiss our culture for economic fortune. He believes that computerization and globalization are major forces in our lives, but that Canada has and will continue to survive if we hold onto those social qualities (eg. universal health care) that make us an extremely rich nation.

Swartz, Mark. *Get Wired, You're Hired*. Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1997.

Get Wired, You're Hired is a Canadian guide to online job hunting. It is a comprehensive manual for using and developing tools for online career management. It helps you format and send your résumé electronically, network the hidden job market and take advantage of online job banks.

Interesting Career Development and Other Websites You Should Check Out!!

- **The Annotated Portfolio: An Experiential, Proactive Learning Strategy** - http://www.so.va.us/vcca/hart2.htm.
- **Ball State University Career Services, Professional Employment Portfolio** - http:www.bsu.edu/career/foliojsb.html.
- **Canada WorkInfoNet** - http://www.workinfonet.ca.
- **Canadian Association of Career Education and Employers Online**: [Tips for resumes and interview, survey's on employer's views on hiring] - http://www.cacee.com
- **CareerEdge** - http://www.careeredge.org
- **Career Paths Online** - The Official Career Planning Guide for BC and the Yukon, http://careerpathsonline.com
- **Human Resources Development Canada's Labour Market Information Page**- http://www.csolve.net/~lakeland/e/html/ labour_market_information.html.
- **JobFutures** - http://hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs /english/index.html.
- **The Job Search Process** - [A comprehensive site for resumes, cover letters, application letters and follow-up letters] - http:www.jobtrak.com/jobsearch_docs /pointers.html#resume.
- **JobSmart: Two Dozen Hot Resume Tips from Yana Parker** - http://jobsmart.org/tools/resume/yana24.htm#3.
- **Motive8 Online: The Official School-To-Work Transition Webzine** - http://motive8.com.
- **New Bees Guide to Journalling** - http://gracefallbee.com/newbees /journalling.html.
- **Preparing the Ideal Scannable Resume** - http://www.resumix.com/resume/ resume_tips.html

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- **Professional Employment Portfolio** - http://www.bsu.edu/careers/ foliojsb.html
- **Schoolfict** - http://www.schoolnet.ca
- **Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon** - http://www.virginia.edu/~bct7m/bacon.html
- **Society of Canadian Women in Science and Technology** - http://habour .sfu.ca/scwist.
- **WorkSearch** - http://www.worksearch.gc.ca
- **Writing Your Resume** - http://www.pond.com/~lougpa/resume.htm.
- **The Youth Resource Network of Canada** - [English] http:www.youth.gc.ca; [French] http://www.jeunesse.gc.ca.

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